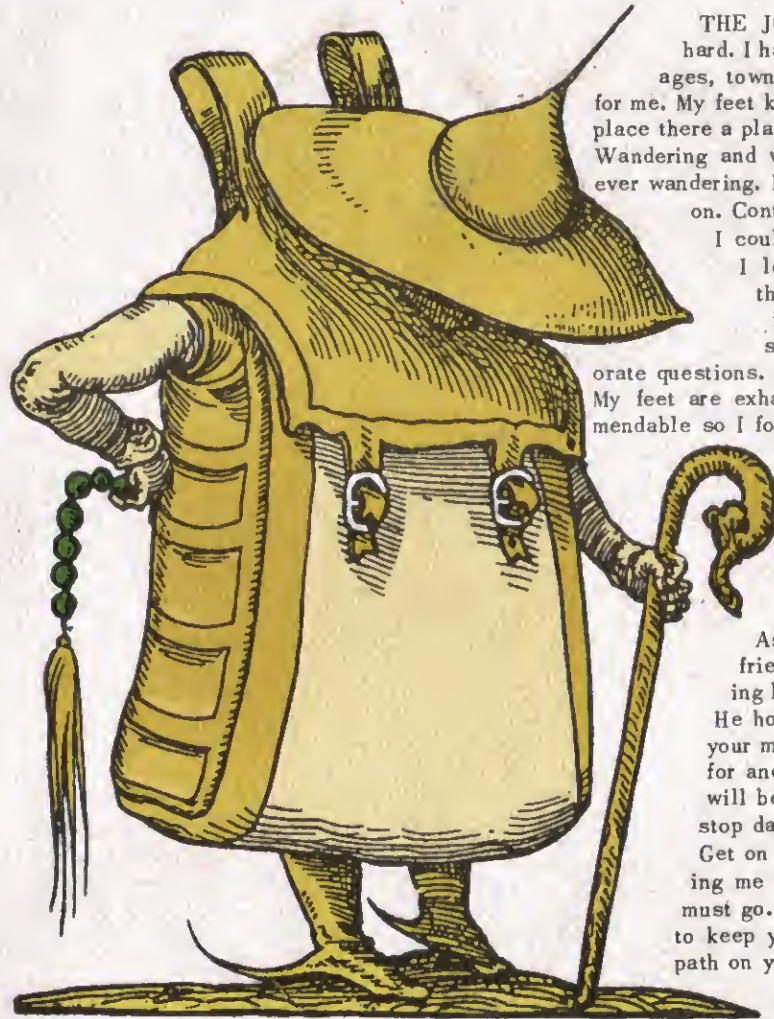


THE JOURNEY



THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN long and hard. I have trudged through cities, villages, towns. There seems to be no place for me. My feet keep moving and moving. Here a place there a place and then over there a place. Wandering and wandering and wandering. Forever wandering. I light my lantern and continue on. Continue on my journey. To where?

I couldn't give you precise details. I let my imagination take me on the journey. Why let my weary imagination lead the way? You sure ask huge handfuls of elaborate questions. But I will answer you anyway. My feet are exhausted and my heart is barely mendable so I follow the vast ocean of visions

and utopian dreams my mind draws into focus. Castles standing tall in the air amidst peach and nectarine trees and wild flowers. Wild flowers as far as the eye can see.

As you journey into the castle a friendly jester greets you by doffing his hat that extends to the roof. He holds out his hand and you open your mouth in awe. But I will save it for another time. The complete story will be told at a later date. I need to stop daydreaming and get on the road. Get on with my journey. Stop distracting me with your curious questions. I must go. Good day to you and remember to keep your lantern lit. Sometimes the path on your journey can be dim.

Communicating Vessels, PO Box 83408, Portland, OR 97283

COMMUNICATING VESSELS

ISSUE 21, FALL-WINTER 2009-2010



Iulius, Augustus, nec non et Iulius Aestas.

Frugiferas arvis fert Aestas torrida menses.

IN THIS ISSUE: Letters to the Editor, A Tribute to Franklin Rosemont, Kenneth Rexroth's 'A Bestiary', Surrealism and the Arab World, Cairo Surrealism, Book Notes, Crossing the Eerie Unknown Bridge in St. Johns, Reviews of Books and Other Publications, Living Without a Phone, Unusual Stories and Pictures and Images, Cutting Remarks, Jests, Experiments and Follies, Unripe Fruit, Straw and Hay, Figs and Grapes, Sweet Fruit, Roses and Rose Hips, Things One Has Seen and Read and Known and Lived Through!

THE QUIET CENTER

By Kenneth Rexroth, 1965

The following is from a column Kenneth Rexroth wrote for the September 13, 1965 edition of the San Francisco Examiner. No money is being made from reproducing it here.

LAST WEEK I WAS AWAY, in a cabin deep in the woods, recollecting myself. No papers. No radio. No phone number. I go away as often as I can, which is not very often. Sometimes I write. Mostly I don't even think. I just contemplate – the forest, the world beyond it, myself, or the object of contemplation that comes when the mind empties itself of itself. Sometimes all existence seems to slip into focus. All its violence and tragedy and disorder take on a form and meaning that the mind can grasp briefly. Then the turmoil of existence seems a matter of scarcely perceptible changes of phase, like an ever so slightly varying colored light shifting over an immense diamond.

What holds a civilization together, and makes the difference between creative growth and decay? What is the foundation that underlies and sustains all the activities of a people and energizes and forms that special unity we call culture? Peace. The peace which comes from the habit of contemplation. It is not intellectual knowledge of the unity of human endeavor, nor a philosophical notion of the ultimate meaning of the universe. It is an inward sense and an abiding quality of life, a temper of the soul. It is not rare nor hard to find. It offers itself at moments to everyone.

from early childhood on, although less and less often if it is not welcomed. It can be seized and trained and cultivated until it becomes a constant habit in the background of daily life. Without it life is only turbulence, from which eventually meaning and even all intensity of feeling die out in tedium and disorder.

Culture. Back there in the city orchestras are rehearsing, painters are painting, singers are warbling scales, actors are learning parts, writers are pacing the floor or pounding the

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No e-mail. You will have to pick up the enclosed envelope, a pen and a stamp if you want to get in contact. There is no website or MySpace page for this publication. Such mediums are contrary to the spirit of this publication. And if we spent time building websites, it would take time away from our true passion: producing a creative and literate publication. Because 'everybody' has a website *does not* mean we need one as well.

Subscriptions are now available on a donation basis. Give what you can. If you cannot afford to give anything that is fine as well. Please: send cash only or the equivalent in US postage stamps.



Nuestro Pan De Cada Dia... Mocoloco
Our Daily Bread...

EXIT. LEAVE THE world we have tried to create here in these pages. Run as fast as your legs will take you. Go off and bake your own bread. Allow it to leaven and take hold. Then you can hoist it into a brick oven and let the elements of heat and rock form the loaf.

When it is finished baking cut it into slices and serve it warm to friends and neighbors and strangers. But remember that people who have shared bread and ideas have often been regarded by the authorities as heretical devils. To that we can only say: Let the heretical bakers of bread rise and multiply.



typewriter. People are struggling to achieve their ends, to make themselves known, to make money, to find love, a million little electric charges of acquisitiveness surging through a huge dynamic field. What holds it all together? Only that inward peace in which acquisitive tensions are resolved. To the disorderly, it is disordered. To the rapacious, man is wolf to man. To the futile, life is meaningless. It does not have a meaning which can be summed up in a mathematical equation, an order with a conclusion which can be demonstrated by infallible logic. There is no "proof" of existence. There is only creative response. The source of that response is the quiet habit of openness to a harmony which is beyond the individual, but which contains and fulfills him.

When this creative response and its sense of the wholeness of life is widely diffused

through a society, we can speak of culture or civilization. The society is alive and growing. As it dies out, the society withers. When it is gone the society is dead, though it may last, massive and sterile and affluent, like a golden mummy, for centuries, or, on the other hand, be only a geographical expression for vast chaos and misery.



PUBLICATION NOTES

Producing this issue was quite a creative challenge. Learning how to use the machine that was donated to this project has been like going back in time. When everyone seems to be buying the latest gadget for graphic design, here we are using a machine that was systematically tossed out when the computer came along. In order to use one of these machines you have to be able to look backward rather than forward, so to speak. But the advantages of being able to use a machine like this are many: less reliance on computers; a unique appearance; the fact that probably only one or two other people in the US

are using it for production work.

We are still trying to work out a system for acknowledging the extensive financial contributions of our readers. We hope to figure that out by the next issue. We do appreciate all the support we've received, financial and otherwise. Thanks especially to Fred Woodworth whose unwavering technical assistance and donations have contributed to making this publication what it now is. Also, Charles of Eberhardt Press has provided invaluable knowledge and help with getting our offset press operational. Thanks.

This Issue is Dedicated to the Memory of
FRANKLIN ROSEMONT

EDITORIAL

TIME FLIES. People age. Their hair turns grey and their teeth start to fall out. And then our lives end. We become cosmic dust. Our bodies decompose in a coffin placed beneath layers of soil. Or our bodies are turned into ashes. The lives of futility or meaning we made for ourselves are no more.

But life goes on. The stars continue to glisten. Men and women fall in love. Birds sing. Spring turns into summer and fall into winter. Even with the vast ecological and social destruction taking place, the cycle trudges along. There are fewer and fewer songbirds. The seasons aren't as defined. And connections between human beings are harder to make. Nonetheless, finding meaning in our lives is a universal part of the human condition. For thousands of years men and women have written songs, painted paintings, planted gardens, watched birds, told folktales — all in an attempt to lend a form and pattern to their lives. Human beings become better at writing songs, painting paintings, planting gardens, watching birds and telling folktales by refining their skill, drawing inspiration and memory from the past, while having an understanding of their current situation.

The same could be said of the publication you are now reading and holding in your hands. The editor has gained more experience and insight since the first issue

came out in 2001. He has become a better writer and a far deeper thinker. He is also now equipped with the confidence and capacity to express himself creatively. This is a marked evolution from the early days. We are convinced it is for the best. We think this is so for a number of reasons. Let us explain.

The primary reason why our evolution is such a positive development is because we now own the means of production. Starting with the next issue we will be entirely in control of the production process. Few publications that exist today can say this. We are not bragging. We are excited about this and we are merely trying to share our enthusiasm with you. We also take pride in the fact that we are doing it on a shoestring budget. With a small amount of money, determination, moderate mechanical aptitude and generous support, advice and machinery from friends and mentors, this production will be able to sustain itself for years to come. The road towards this end has been challenging. In the middle of trying to get our offset press restored we were dealing with a scumbag landlord who wanted to up the rent at the house we were renting out by over thirty percent. We were working on the press in the garage and had only lived in the place as a whole for two months. We managed to find a much more suitable living and workshop arrangement.

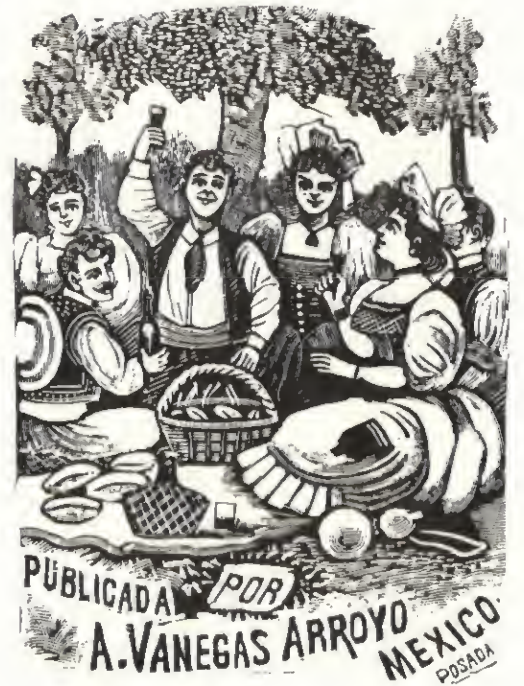


payphones. They are being torn right out. No one needs them anymore. There is no point in questioning such a thing. Just the other day I was making use of a payphone. I was having a long overdue catch-up session with an old friend. Guess what happened? A woman and her boyfriend walked by me. She yelled in an agitated and strident tone: "Why are you using a payphone? Get a cell phone, stupid." It took about half-a-minute for her comment to sink in, and by that time she and her boyfriend were nearly invisible and indistinguishable from the rest of the crowd. I was shocked. My infraction of social etiquette made her violently angry. No one in their right mind would use a payphone. Every Tom, Dick and Harry has a cell phone, and when they want to use it they simply pop it out of their pocket, gaze at the glowing screen, press a few buttons and presto! they are in business. No fumbling with coins and remembering difficult phone numbers to dial. The gadget will do it for

you! How simple and easy! No brainwork!

I don't need it. The mind-numbing banter and jaw-flapping are not important to me. Hearing and observing the servile army of cell phone users makes me want to retreat. I am being bludgeoned and attacked by them and I want to find a corner where I can gather my thoughts.

Am I depriving myself? Is not owning a phone of any kind leading to my ruin? Despite what people say and think about it, I would answer: No. Not at the moment. When I am ready to get a landline I will do so. And if I never have the urge to get one again, so be it. Life is too precious and short to bombard myself with such concerns. I will be listening to the birds sing outside my window, a far greater form of music than the ring of a cell phone or telephone.





background. On the bus one day I witnessed a pudgy and sweaty man in his late-30s carrying on a conversation. In his right hand and on his right ear he had a fancy cell phone and in his left hand he had another cell phone that he was "text-messaging" on. To top it off he had a headphone connected to his left ear! Talk about insanity! But I am regarded as crazy for not having a phone. A tiny shred of consciousness goes a long way. The digital commodity-culture we reside in lacks even a microscopic amount of it. Ceaselessly chatting on your phone at the library is a common activity. After all, you need to do

something while waiting for your turn to use the public access Internet computers.

Do cell phones and constant "texting" translate into a better life? No. It means being available to your employer at any hour of the day. You have no real excuse not to get back to your boss immediately if they know you have a cell phone.

There are times when I do need to get in touch with one person or another. What do I do in this case? Use a payphone. Use one of the remaining payphones left. There are luckily quite a few of them in Portland. In most American cities and towns there has been a systematic razing of

The place we live and do this production out of now is still part of Portland. But it is in the woods. Quite an evolution. There are bald eagles flying around in the woods. And it is quiet out here. It is good for concentration. In fact, while we were learning how to use the machine that this editorial was typeset on, we would gaze out at the abundant trees and listen to the birds. It is a remarkable setting to do this kind of work in. The annoyances and distractions of the city are not present here. It is peaceful and serene in this part of town.

There are aspects of antiquity that we cherish. Perhaps there is a certain amount of naive nostalgia in this. The past had its own set of problems that closely resemble those we face today: wars, alienation, poverty, social regimentation, slavish and unyielding conformity. The list could go on and on. Even so, without a grounding in the past there is no basis from which a work of art can leave its cultural inheritance to later generations. The bulk of the mediocre and just plain terrible art of today will be forgotten tomorrow. Something that speaks to the present but carries the past within it has a much greater chance of exercising a lasting impact on the reader, listener or person experiencing the production. The work has to indeed have its own aspect of newness to it. It can't be a disembodied replica of what was done in a different time and place. It must go beyond the past and endow itself with its own frame of reference — a frame of reference that speaks of desires, dreams, wants, needs and fears. A language and form of reference that is individual yet universal; a way of seeing and being in the world. Seeing over the massive



clouds of lies. Retaining human dignity as an inhabitant of this hideous world.

You may ask: What does this synopsis have to do with the publication you are now reading? Plenty. This is our underlying aim and overall philosophy of publishing. We strive to write material that has a lasting impact and influence on the world. Our aim is also to make the publication visually appealing. Doing this is readily within our grasp because we have production equipment available to us. Transitioning over to the machine that was used to typeset this editorial on will give it a rich and classy appearance. It will give it a human face. And being equipped with the knowledge and skill to use the equipment gives us a large sum of independence from the digital world.

Going against the tide has its use in the realm of creative endeavor. You are able to pursue your goals without succumbing to

pressure from people who insist they know how you should be proceeding. I suspect that our lack of interest in following trends is what separates us from the crowd. We are suspicious of the latest trends in art as well as the latest crazes emanating from the intellectual fog factories known as universities. Most professors and pompously self-proclaimed intellectuals tend to be uninteresting and hopelessly dull. If we are not aiming to please followers and loyal adherents of the present world, who then are we publishing this for? Dreamers and those who are disenchanted by this world, those who can't stand the lies and falsehood and fakery of it. And here we try to expose it. Expose it for what it is.

And there lies our saving grace. We are being honest with ourselves, and attempting to paint a picture of the reality that we inhabit. With the old machinery that we are using there is also a window into the past. A window into the present illuminated by the past. Perhaps a century from now a person on this planet will stumble across a copy of this publication. There lies a possibility: he or she could come to have a better understanding of the world as it existed a hundred years prior. And from this might come a creative surge on their part. And the light of the torch would continue to shine. We are convinced that this is the essence of refinement and evolution.

SPRING

By Arturo Serrano Plaja

Here by the bridges of the Seine
In this spring of exile
I know I am old at last and alone with my pain.
And I feel the weight of the chain
Of all my dilapidated liberty.

Here I am, a knotted and wormeaten trunk,
Stripped leafless in this winter country.
And now there come to my branches
And to my trunk of forgetfulness,
So lightly, the morning sparrows
And begin to build a nest.

Here I am, bridge to another age —
And in the current, bye gone, raw memories,
Like melting snow
Under a burning sun,
Pass away beneath my eyes
And leave only their reflections
Like brilliant light in a mirror.

translated by Kenneth Rexroth



woman is used to it. This is how it has always been and always will be. Imagination has been drained away.

The idea of not having a phone — landline or cell phone — is hopelessly incomprehensible. People think it is impossible to survive and perhaps even live without one. Not having a phone translates into not having a life. I beg to differ. I live a rewarding and fulfilling life without the intrusion of phones. I manage to do the things I want and then some. Eventually I suspect I will get a landline. The ringer will be kept off the majority of the time.

The primary reason why I plan to get a telephone connected is because the majority of my friends have difficulty contacting me. I don't quite understand it. I would think that my friends are creative enough to find alternate ways of getting in touch with me: sending me a postcard in the mail suggesting we meet at such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time; or stopping by my work with the intention of surprising me; or

the myriad of other ways to find people by chance and semi-planned encounter. A close friend of mine, who is often on the road traveling, has sent me postcards informing me of when he intends to be in town. On the postcard he scribes down a phone number to contact him at.

"Well," you say, "we live in the modern world and no one has time to do what you are suggesting." "And people often *have* to have a phone for their career or job search." True. I am not saying people should entirely stop using phones or contact me in what are seen as eccentric ways. But "convenience" and instantaneous "communication" have stirred up their own hornet's nest of social problems. People can't sit still for longer than a second and they always need to be yapping away on their electronic contraptions. While endlessly having nothing to say, they need to be checking their e-mail and playing a CD or DVD in the



Instantaneous "communication" frequently means lack of communication. At the food store where I am employed I constantly observe people calling their spouses or boyfriends and girlfriends. Why? They are trying to determine what they are going to buy and fix for dinner. Instead of planning ahead and making a list these people wait until the last minute and end up wasting time in the process. Commonsense and rational thinking seem to go out the window when a cell phone is placed on the head. Maybe there is truth to the assertion that cell phones are like putting a microwave oven to your brain and other sensitive organs.

We would argue that more is said in one issue of this publication than in a lifetime of cell phone

conversations. There are exceptions. And people might be opening their mouths and letting words escape. Many, many words. But the words I hear lack substance, poetry and alchemy. Words should be greater than the syllables and letters they are composed of. They should sing and dance and say something to yourself and others.

I prefer silence to chitchat and empty laughs. Most people in America cannot deal with silence. The lack of sound aside from the rustling of trees and the chirping of hummingbirds. I am listening to it right now. No voices. Nothing. Quiet.

In the "real" world music has to be blaring, phones have to be ringing, people need to be talking, cars have to blaze by and jackhammers have to be drilling. The 21st century man and



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Loren Goldner is stuck in that Bordiguist swamp, but he is not alone.

I must go for now.

All the best,

Michel Prigent
London, England

P.S. I normally don't answer when people do not include a courteous letter.

P.P.S. I will post this letter on the Internet site, it raises important questions.

The Editor Responds:

Included in the envelope with Michel's letter was an insulting photocopy which stated L'Introuvable: "for Cyclops with little between ears." Above the caption was a photograph of a monocle. In handwriting on the back Michel tells us it's "Bordiga's glass! As worn by Loren Goldner!"

I am perplexed. Did you even bother to read issue number 20? Or did you merely look for the stuff you might happen to disagree with and then write me a letter suggesting that I am stuck in the past? There was a whole section on "Utopia and the Crisis of the Human Imagination" which is enormously relevant. There was even an article in that section that addressed the contemporary food crisis. All of this apparently escaped your attention. In response I get a snide and cocky response from you telling me that I am doing everything wrong, including my choice not to use an e-mail address for this project.

You might think my choice is ridiculous, but for not having an e-mail address the response to this publication in the form of letters and donations has been overwhelming. I would say it is even more substantial than some website only publications. I find it amazing that people are so seduced by the computer, the Internet and e-mailing that they find it necessary to degrade and belittle those who

Confusion Reigns

Dear Anthony,
I received your C.V. It looks good. The content less so. A lot of old stuff. Ruling class there. working class there. As if it was so simple. Don't expect Dauve to help you in that matter.

I noted your plug for Chronos Publications, I await what you don't like about Moishe Postone's *Anti-Semitism and National Socialism*.

Your anti-e-mail rant is ridiculous, in fact that medium can be of use, to disseminate critical ideas.

As for Bordiga, anti-fascism was as bad as fascism. Unbelievable. Yet he benefited from Italy being free of fascists. At least he could start writing and publishing again. Some dialectician!



choose to do things in a different way. You can have your computer, Internet and e-mail. I won't take them away from you. Slobber all over them and make love to the console and screen if you like. It's up to you. I won't stop you. But when you suggest to me in an authoritative voice that I *must* get an e-mail and have a web presence to disseminate critical ideas, that is where I draw the line. It makes me want to distance myself even further from the Internet and computers.

I am sure Loren Goldner is quite capable of defending himself. Nonetheless, I think you are dead wrong in suggesting that Loren Goldner is some kind of orthodox adherent of Amadeo Bordiga. Again, I recommend you do your research before you start trying to explain or dismiss things that don't conform to what Moishe Postone has said.

William Everson and Kenneth Rexroth

Greetings Anthony,
Thank you for sending #'s 18, 19 and 20. Also, for the poem by Kenneth Rexroth, of which the text appears to be letterpress. I attended a reading by Kenneth in the very late '70s in Santa Cruz,

CA at the Laurel Community Center. It could have been as late as '80 or '81. He was also accompanied by an Asian or Asian/American on the Shakuhachi. A great experience!

Letterpress always reminds me of the late, great letterpress printer and poet, William Everson. I have a signed copy of his *Masks of Drought*. In his later years he also lived in Santa Cruz County and it was dreadful to see his sad decline with Parkinson's disease. His appearance and reputation gave him an incredible presence.

Besides doubling up my original donation, please send me a copy of *No Hope* by Sam Bain printed by Eberhardt Press at your address. \$7.50 for the book and \$6 for you. If this is not acceptable, just send me a note.

For Pachamama,

Rick
Sonora, CA

The Editor Responds:

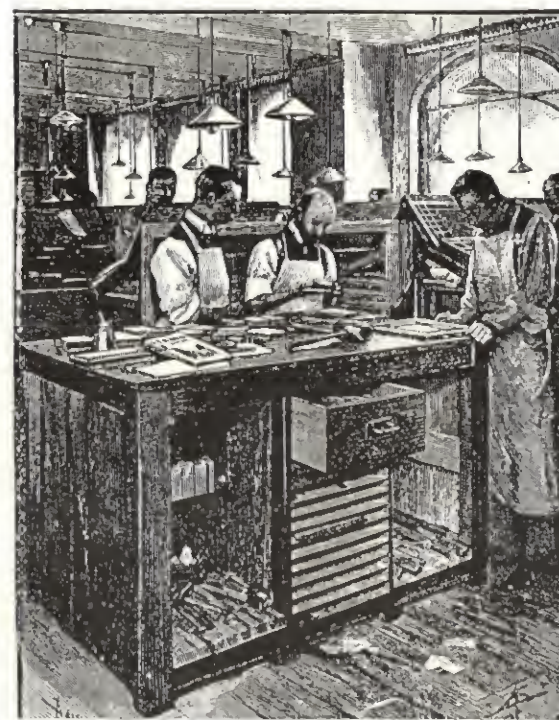
I have respect and admiration for William Everson. I have seen some of the work he did on the iron handpress and it is remarkable. He also wrote one of the most unusual, confused, original, self righteous, wise and zealously religious autobiographical novels I've ever read. It is called *Prodigious Thrust*.

Books For Sale

A reader in England asks that we list his address as a source for used books which include: science fiction, crime, fiction, thrillers, Marvel comics and more. Write to his address for more details:

E. Francis
47 Nansen Road
Saltley B8 3JP
England
United Kingdom

This book is worth your time. It is a unique look at the life of an anarchist who participated in protests against the Vietnam war in the '60s and then went on to become an inventive printer and typographer. Unlike many radicals and activists from the '60s, the author never became a bureaucrat, academic or Democratic Party partisan. He retained his humanity and dignity and continues to expose the realities he and other people experience at the hands of bureaucrats, police and state agents, politicians and religious cranks.



Idle Banter and Ring Tones: LIVING WITHOUT A PHONE

I HAVEN'T HAD a phone for six months. No landline. No cell phone. When I moved out of my old residence in December I intended to hook up a telephone at the new abode. It never happened. There are a few reasons why.

Initially I couldn't afford it. And I probably still can't afford it. If I did some number crunching I suspect it would be outside my budget.

But financial concerns are only part of it. I genuinely *like* not having a phone. Yes. Believe it or not: not having a phone is a pleasure to me. I have never owned a cell phone, and in the past I have tended to keep the ringer off on the landlines I've possessed. The ring disturbs me. Its urgent ring, ring and my curiosity blended together are a terrible combination. "Who is it," "Another salesperson, I bet," "Why are they calling so early?" These questions and scenarios race through my mind, until I give in to my puzzled curiosity.

Today people's identity and self worth are bound up in that ring, ring. Listening to people's "private" cell phone conversations in public places – buses, street corners, stores, libraries! – makes me endlessly annoyed. Nothing is being said. Too much talking. Idle chatter. It doesn't matter, though. Why? Because people feel important and recognized when someone decides to phone or "text" them. And if you fail to answer your phone or "text" message, people get offended. They start to believe that you are ignoring or rejecting them as a person. When the ring tone goes off on your cell phone, you better answer it, even if you are having a face-to-face conversation with a friend. Your life and future possibility of having "friends" depends on it. If that is what "friendship" is about in the year 2009, count me out.

Slingshot: News and articles from an anarchist perspective. Berkeley cops raided the Long Haul, the infoshop this newsletter is compiled and composed in. Stand in solidarity with them by subscribing to their publication. \$1 per issue. Contact: Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Troploin: The most recent issue of this newsletter is No. 6. It is a long essay called "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Autonomy," an original criticism of democracy. It is provocative and thoughtful. Write for a copy. Contact: Aredhis, BP 20306, 60203 Compiègne Cedex, France.

The Whinger: Subtitled "Irregular Socialist Rantazine". This is a humorous collection of rants and strange doodles. Always an entertaining read. No contact address listed, aside from an email: ppetard@hotmail.com.

Write to anarchist prisoner Jérôme White-Bey. Legal help, friendship and solidarity are needed and appreciated. Jerome White-Bey No. 37479, ERDCC 4-B-211, 2727 Hwy K, Bonne Terre, MO 63628



REVIEW:
Landmarks in the Desert
By Kent Winslow

\$12 postpaid (cash only)
(The Match! PO Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702)

BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED BOOKS ARE RARE these days. Both mainstream and independently produced books are often similar in appearance: glossy cover with overdone and excessively pixelated images; poor typography and an overall lack of intimacy and personal flavor. The content is often as flawed as the design: sloppy writing and no real zest for the imagination and the craft of writing.

Kent Winslow's newest book *Landmarks in the Desert* is a different breed. The book was typeset primarily on a Justewriter, a machine from the mid-20th century. The chapter titles as well as italics were composed on a Varityper that is closely similar to the one I am using to type out the review you are now reading. The actual printing was done on a small one-color Multilith 1250 offset press. The printer and designer then decided to add another touch of stylistic beauty to it by spraypainting the top lip of the book. The focus and attention given to the craft of book production tells you something about the content.

Winslow takes you on a journey through the many twists and turns of his unusual and unconventional life. On this journey he outlines his encounters with the police, religious zealots, bureaucrats, the writings of Marshal South and nonhuman animals. The story of his life is told with a candid bluntness seldom experienced in any autobiographical novel, mainstream or independent.

A Few Comments

Hi Anthony,
A few comments on C.V. #20. First and foremost, the color cover is nicely done. I trust its visual appeal will increase the chances of people actually picking it up!

The editorial "Forty Years Since 1968" was thoughtful and sobering and provides a contextual history to this "nostalgic/mythic" year, so often hailed by those fundamentally discontent with the present as representing a time of expanded possibility. But if there was an impatient urgency in the 1960s that sometimes demanded a kind of revolutionary instant gratification, how much more prevalent is such sentiment in our social environment today when the attention span is even more fragmented and distracted? "Text me about it!"

The letters section was refreshing to read, but I have to wonder why 1930s Spain was omitted from the "Expanded Version of Thesis on State Capitalism vs. Real Socialism." Found the implications based around the question about "what class runs the government" to come a little too close to statist leftism, although the letter's context tends to dispel this impression somewhat.

You've made a lot of statements about books, literacy and new versus older printing technology and much of this is a joy to read. Although I own an intriguing "Little Blue Book" on Autosuggestion, I've been less aware of what E. Haldemann Julius actually thought until reading about him in your article "The State of the Book and Bookselling in America." The irony of the greater ease of modern publishing is that a glut of crap and mediocrity becomes harder to navigate through while in search of those books of actual quality. But as some past CIA director said, "everyone knows American's don't read!" This is another obstacle to the transformations we desire.

Although I had already seen two of the six articles in the special section on "Utopia and the Crisis of the Human Imagination," this was a

nice touch. "Food as Utopia" had me remembering how good fresh carrots and tomatoes from my grandparents garden actually tasted. Rexroth's article on Fourier manages to point out some strengths and weaknesses of the phalanstery model. If Fourier's vision had some objectionable elements like rent and a kind of ruling elite, not to mention the early mornings, he was also quite ahead of his time when discussing attractive labor and passionate attraction.

"An Alchemical Dream" makes some good points about rationalist and scientific outlooks, when taken too far they can smother intuition and wonder. We're certainly capable of using the basic elements of the "scientific method" without discarding that sense of "extreme romanticism" that Clarence John Laughlin described. While this is a complex subject, it's most interesting to find the points where a more flexible notion of science and poetic experience can harmonize to some degree. The surrealist inspired idea of finding these parallels might stand a chance of breaking down some of the barriers between science or "scientism" as we know it and our inborn capability to exercise Breton's "enjoyment before understanding."

Cheers,

MK Shibek
Portland, OR

The United Kingdom and Food

Greetings Anthony,
Received issue 20 of *Communicating Vessels*, thanks loads. I haven't read it properly yet - it takes time. I'm going to take a good look at your "Food as Utopia" as the food production and agricultural questions are particularly important right now. A place like the United Kingdom is currently heavily dependent on imported food, and at any moment in time there is only two

weeks supply of food in the shops and warehouses to feed the population. It makes you think...

All the best,

Paul Petard
London, England

It Takes All Kinds

Anthony

Communicating Vessels fully rocks dude! I took a few bong hits and read with some Zep and Floyd blasting as my soundtrack! Ha ha. I fully got the munchies after reading it so I made myself a bowl of vanilla ice cream with honey/chocolate sauce/ and brown sugar.

Some suggestions:

Maybe put more pictures of hot chicks in it. Nothing sexist, but since you're all into old shit, you could put in some flappers or something.

Maybe include more music – like metal stuff.

And why not put some ads in it? Make some fuckin' money dude!

Zeb
Honolulu, HI

The Editor Responds:

Uh. Yeah. I will keep your suggestions in mind. Thanks for the wisdom.

It's the Zionists and Israel, Stupid

Dear *Communicating Vessels*,

I read with interest the article "Are We All Hamas and Hezbollah? – A Critical Look at the Left's Flirtation with Islamic Fundamentalism" in issue 19 of your magazine.

I enclose my new pamphlet *The Mass Psychology of Anti-Fascism*, which comes to conclusions diametrically opposed to yours. Instead of dismissing Mearseimer and Walt's bestseller *The Israel Lobby* as a "conspiracy theory," as

you do, I rely on it to explain the US Middle East policy. In truth, they do not describe the Lobby as a conspiracy. In fact, the Lobby is mostly legal and fairly open. When you state that Mearseimer and Walt's viewpoint is "fragmentary," you are just using a piece of ultra-left jargon to avoid the issue. Whether you believe the US political system is supposed to serve capitalist interests, or the interests of "the people" as Mearseimer and Walt believe, the Israel Lobby's power is a separate question.

You do have a point when you say that America would still bomb other countries without the influence of the Lobby. But understanding the Lobby is key to understanding why America bombs particular countries and not others. If US Middle East policy is not driven by US capitalist interests, but by Israel's, we have some chance of changing it, rather than complaining about how fragmentary it is.

Worse, you give various hints in your article that you buy the idea that critics of the Israel lobby are closet anti-semites. "By monomanically focusing on Israel, Saudi Arabia and America are taken off the hook." In my pamphlet, I parody the "taken off the hook" argument, and demolish the followers of Chomsky, whose love of Israel and hatred of America is so pathological they claim that in 2006, the USA "goaded" Israel into attacking Lebanon in order to stir up hatred against itself and take the heat off Uncle Sam. You endorse this perspective at the end of your article when you recommend the Zionist magazine *Tikkun*'s "rebuttal" of the *Israel Lobby*.

In issue 20, you uncritically published a letter from the anarchists of *The Fifth Estate* claiming that there is such a thing as "left anti-semitism." This is how Zionists smear critics of Israel. In the USA, the left is *pro-semitic*. America's support for Israel is itself *pro-Jewish racism* (contrast its sanctions against South Africa) and its political atmosphere, including the left, anarchists and the ultra-left, is permeated by that form of racism.

economic and social crisis we are facing. A pleasing and eye-catching one-page publication. Available for a few postage stamps. Contact: Vagabond Publications, 3527 NE 15th Ave. #144, Portland, OR 97212.

Dwelling Portably: This publication on portable dwellings and practical how-to skills on how to live cheaply has been going since the 1980s. Even if this isn't an interest of yours, the editors' Bert and Holly always have something to say that is thoughtful and relevant to broader concerns. Send \$5 or so for back issues and the latest edition. Contact: DP c/o Lisa Ahne, P.O. Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324-0181.

Eberhardt Press: This anarchist publisher has consistently released quality productions. The printing is superb, and the typography is a joy to look at. Their newest release is Ron Sakolsky's new book, *Swift Winds*. It is a collection of Sakolsky's writings, with wonderful illustrations by Anais LaRue. Send \$10 ppd. for a copy. Contact: Eberhardt Press, 3527 NE 15th Ave. #127, Portland, OR 97212.

Echanges: The aging council communist Henri Simon continues to publish his newsletter in French. There are accounts of strikes and actions on the job, correspondence and theoretical articles in every issue. 15 euros for a subscription. Contact: *Echanges*, B.P. 241, 75866 Paris Cedex 18, France.

Flying Picket Historical Society: This is a website, but we will list it because it has a number of important and relevant articles and bits of information related to labor history and working class solidarity. Contact: www.flyingpicket.org.

J.L. Hudson, Seedsman: A catalog of seeds for growing flowers, herbs and vegetables. Huge inventory. Carry a large selection of tobacco. Useful resource for the seed saver and vegetable and flower grower. It is typeset on a Linotype, one of the few still in operation. \$1 for a catalog.



Contact: J.L. Hudson Seedsman, P.O. Box 337, La Honda, CA 94020.

The Match!: A visually appealing and pleasurable "Journal of Ethical Anarchism". They have been going since 1969 and show no signs of stopping anytime soon. Send a donation for a copy. Contact: *The Match!*, P.O. Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702.

The Mystery and Adventure Series Review: This publication is an entrance into a time capsule. In *The Mystery and Adventure Series Review* we are drawn into the world of series books and obsolete popular culture. The editor typesets and prints the publication himself. Send a donation for a copy. Contact: *The Mystery and Adventure Series Review*, P.O. Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702.

The Oystercatcher: The focus here is on the radical history of British Columbia. A nicely done journal. Mostly contains original articles. Send a donation for a copy. Contact: Ron Sakolsky, A-4062 Wren Road, Denman Island, BC V0R 1T0, Canada.

WORTHWHILE PUBLICATIONS AND PROJECTS

Anchorage Anarchy: An anarcho-individualist publication that contains musings on the state of the world. \$1 per issue. Contact: Bad Press, P.O. Box 230332, Anchorage, AK 99523-0332.

Aufheben: A consistently critical and well-done examination of current reality, from a left communist perspective. The latest issue contains an article on "New Labour and the Muslim Community," suggesting that New Labour is using multicultural politics to gain supporters and endorsers for their party. Issue No. 17 also includes a critical look at "Al-Sadr and Resistance in Iraq". 9 pounds for three issues. Contact: *Aufheben*, Brighton and Hove Unemployed Workers Centre, P.O. Box 2536, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 6LX, United Kingdom.

Black Giraffe: A publication of dreams, notes, visions and unusual experiences written and published by Brandon Freels, former member of the Portland Surrealist Group. No contact address listed, aside from an email address: bjf97267@yahoo.com.

Black Rim Nigra Rando: This production is devoted to examining and chronicling what is taking place in Asia. It is written from an anarcho-communist perspective, and is filled with fascinating tidbits about strikes and protests in that region. Again, no contact address listed, aside from an email address: kangdengming@riseup.net.

Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company: Still publishing after all these years. They sent us a copy of *A Menagerie in Revolt*, selected writings of Benjamin Péret. It has an introduction by Franklin Rosemont and an afterword by Don LaCoss on Péret's "Ecological Imagination". Péret was a surrealist poet and militia-fighter in the Spanish Revolution. This book contains a choice selection of his writings, some of which

have never been published in English before. The articles run the gamut. Pieces on popular Mexican and pre-Columbian art are juxtaposed with essays on slave uprisings in Brazil and workers councils. This is a unique collection. Additionally, we received a copy of the pamphlet *Surrealism in '68: Paris, Prague, Chicago* by Don LaCoss. It is an accessible introduction to the year 1968 and what surrealists were doing during that period. I recommend both the book and the pamphlet. Contact: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1726 West Jarvis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60626.

Collective Reinventions: Publisher of pamphlets and tracts on the recent Greek uprising, the recuperation of the anti-war movement by Leninists and Maoists and the Oaxaca rebellion. Thoughtful and nuanced. Send a few bucks for a pamphlet. Contact: Collective Reinventions, P.O. Box 61036, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Cracks in the Concrete: This is a journal written by Luke Romano, an anarchist living in Tucson. In it he examines and questions the state and police repression. He also reprints historical classics of anarchism. Youthful and feisty. Available for a donation. Contact: Luke Romano, P.O. Box 2748, Tucson, AZ 85702.

The Cunningham Amendment: "Handprinted on obsolete machines, using salvaged type and discarded ink," so says the masthead. A creative and contagious anarchist publication. The amazing part is the typesetting. It is handset with meticulous care and attention to detail. Send a donation. Contact: *The Cunningham Amendment*, 1005 Huddersfield Road, Bradford BD12 8LP, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

The Cynical Utopian: Composed on a typewriter with images that were made from hand carved rubber stamps. The lead article expounds on the

Mention the Lobby and watch the accusations fly.

Like you, I attended the demonstrations against the Lebanon war, but reached opposite conclusions about what was wrong with them. The protests in Portland and Seattle were smaller than usual. The rent-a-mob anarchists who usually show up at anti-war demos were missing. These protests consisted mostly of well-dressed Lebanese families, unsupported by Americans, politely complaining about cluster bombs raining on their homeland. There was very little of the traditional leftist tail-ending of "anti-imperialist" movements. Like you, I reject anti-imperialism – in a nutshell, because poor people have no interest in fighting and dying for these movements, who only end up exploiting them. I also agree with your criticism of Islamic martyrdom – but doesn't it miss the point – what would make someone *want* to be a suicide bomber? However, I disagree with you about American leftists supporting Islamic fundamentalism. They do not support Hezbollah, even verbally, the way some of them supported the Vietcong. This is not a positive development – the grip of Zionism is so strong, the left aren't follow the logic of its own position! Telling leftists not to support anti-imperialist fighters is a waste of time, like telling the Pope not to be Catholic – unless those fighters are fighting Israel.

The only form of overt racism tolerated, and actively promoted, by the USA, and all other Western countries today, is Zionism. This is true both in the Middle East and at home. The question of Israel and its influence cannot be avoided by mixing left communist truisms with Zionist fiction.

Fraternally,

Jay Knott
Portland, OR

The Editor Responds:

Jay will probably cry censorship because we didn't



list his website which was written in two separate places on his letter. We are under no obligation to list it. If that is stifling his free speech, then tough. I suspect he listed it two times on the letter as a sort of "psychological" test to see if we are Zionist stooges beholden to the state of Israel.

Let me say once and for all: this publication is categorically opposed to the existence of state entities. Whether that state is Israel, the United Arab Emirates or Sri Lanka, we have no use for them and think that human beings would relate with greater humanity without them. We think the same about the economy. Without bosses and wage labor, human beings would be freer and better equipped to pursue their creative and sensual interests.

I read the pamphlet you sent. Far from clarifying the question of Israel and the Middle East, it muddles the issue, provides next to no substantial basis for the argument it is trying to make and presents things in such a way that its only real appeal is to neo-Nazis who want to confirm their own position: that the Jews control the world and because of this

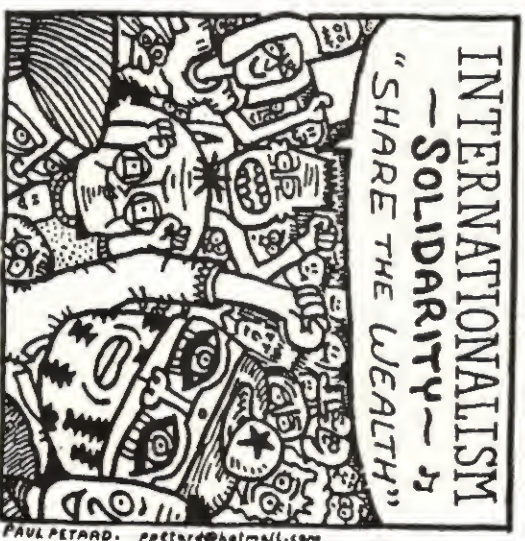
Israel controls American foreign policy. Your pamphlet does not demolish anything. It is utter claptrap. It makes you look like an illogical crackpot and wing nut.

One nugget from the pamphlet that is particularly telling is his distortion of the killing of Ethiopian immigrant to Portland, Mulugeta Seraw. Seraw was killed in Portland in 1988 by neo-Nazi skinheads. Jay Knott makes the absurd claim that Seraw's race had *nothing* to do with his death! The dispute between Seraw and the skinheads was ostensibly over a parking space. Okay. But to say that a group of racist neo-Nazi skinheads confronting an Ethiopian immigrant had nothing to do with race is utterly disgusting. Jay Knott is obviously in line with neo-Nazis on this one.

You do not have to be a proponent of orthodox or ideological anti-fascism to see that Jay's pamphlet is flawed from multiple angles. Trying to address every problem with the pamphlet would fill up this whole publication and overwhelm the other content.

I do not understand why my use of the term fragmentary is such a problem. It is used in a specific context and I am not just throwing the term around to sound sophisticated. I am using it to say: people such as yourself take a piece of reality that might have a kernel or a few kernels of truth, present it as explaining the whole and then walk around as if they possess *The Truth*. I do not understand your obsession with Zionism, the Jews and Israel. It is almost like you are saying "the working class has been defeated and the Islamists are kicking some ass, so we should rally around them."

I am not going to take up the question of the left's support of Hezbollah and Hamas again. Based on my experience and various articles I've read in leftist rags, I think I can say that there is support for such groupings. It is not on the level of the left's support and endorsement of the Vietcong during the 1960s. Even so, it is strong enough to warrant a careful examination. But according to your logic, if the left actually did wholeheartedly stand behind such movements, it would weaken the control the Zionist lobby exerts over American foreign policy and our minds and our hearts. Three cheers for the defeat of the Zionist lobby! And a toast to the de-



struction of Israel and Jewish supremacy! Down with the Zionist Occupied Government! Up with the mullahs!

The Art of Printing

Dear Anthony,
I'm writing in praise of your fine publication, *Communicating Vessels*. The title puts me in mind of old sailing ships, sailing being lost science almost like letter writing is becoming a lost art. I'm happy there are still a few publications (like yours) that communicate strictly by pen and paper (or in this case, carbon backed ribbon and paper).

I'm mighty impressed with the look of *C.V.*. The color work is dazzling. I'm in awe. Why? It's because I know something of what goes into such work. I caught the printing bug from Fred and I've been able to pick up not only a few decent old IBM Executive typewriters (like the one I'm typing on), but also to get at least one old Multith 1250 up and running. That one I took apart completely and put back together, and learned a lot along the way. There's still a lot to learn, though.



connotations in our daily dreams, daydreams, nightmares, fantasies and everyday life. They are perceived as a place where the other half dwells: the homeless, criminals, drunks, drug users and gang bangers. We nightfully fear to tread underneath a bridge or even walk over a bridge alone late at night. Women are especially vulnerable.

In the best aspects of popular culture – the best aspects of popular culture died long ago – and folklore crossing the bridge is frequently laden with symbolism and metaphorical meaning. In many instances it isn't consciously recognized as such.

The symbolism is inescapable. In folklore, the warrior has to slay a dragon before arriving at the other side. If he fails to slay the dragon he will be

eaten alive or thrown down from the bridge into a pit of venomous snakes. If he gets to the other side, his journey through enchanted forests and unclimbed mountains will continue. If he fails, the consequences are obvious: the princess will not be saved and his life will be finished. The urgency of the situation is clearly understood and is felt by the listener or reader.

In the best detective and mystery stories the gothic-looking bridge conjures up scenes of unbridgeable darkness and horror. A man with one eye, wearing a trenchcoat and black gloves can appear out of nowhere and haunt us with his presence. There is no turning back. He has stepped in front of our path and the only thing to do is to run as fast as we can over the bridge.

Like the folklore of hundreds, even thousands of years ago, and popular noir of the late 19th and early-to-mid-20th century, bridges today are still projections of our fantasies, experiences, fears and daily realities. They are in many ways one of the few remaining monuments to what the imagination can dream up. When faced with their beauty, industrial-style ugliness or eerie presence, the mind can seemingly take off and find itself in a different reality. Or it can find itself in a dystopia worse than the present reality.

There are few people I've encountered in Portland who haven't been in some measure mesmerized by the bridge I travel over daily: the St. Johns Bridge. Those who I've chatted with have their own stories and experiences to relate regarding it. There is something truly magnificent and otherworldly about this bridge that boasts of numerous legends and tales. I am not a believer in ghosts and the supernatural. Even so, walking over and under the bridge has made me wonder if there is perhaps a haunted spirit enveloping it.





thinking while I trundle to the Northwest side. As the cars glide over the pavement, I stare at the sky above and the water of the Willamette below. On a clear day the sun reflects off the tiny, coherent waves. Jacob Boehme comes to mind, the 17th century cobbler and mystic of Goerlitz Germany. Boehme gazed one morning at a pewter plate and suddenly visualized the interconnected nature of the universe. My experience is not metaphysical or mystical. It is imaginative. Watching those majestic waves and water and sun combine is like an elixir. The worries of the day are evaporated by the rays of the sun while the water prevents dehydration. I meditate on the sound of the wind and the tiny waves which drown out the cars. Taken together they form a whole.

On a foggy and damp night the bridge has aspects to it that resemble a mystery, gothic or detective novel. There was an occasion when I was walking home late at night. I encountered a middle-aged man with an umbrella strapped to his bike. The bike was squeaking as he wound the pedals. And he had a can of watered-down cheap beer in his hand. I looked at him, the fog, the gothic architecture of the bridge, the blend of trees in the foreground and the dim streetlights shining vaguely through the fog and suddenly felt a chill down my spine. I was suddenly a character in one of those detective novels I still read with delight. Or perhaps I was a character in an 18th or 19th century gothic novel. This man was carrying a knife in his trousers and at any moment he would pull it out and it would glisten and shine in the dim light. With a twisted smile on his face he would chase me on his squeaky bicycle until I fall over the bridge into the polluted river. Or so I imagined.

In another instance, I found myself strolling casually to the opposite end of the bridge. It was again late in the evening, a tad bit foggy and drizzly. There were next to no cars passing in either lane. I was on the right side of the sidewalk. And seemingly out of nowhere as I

I make negatives and plates the same as you describe: Contact sheet against the negative exposed to a low-wattage light bulb, negative to plate in sunlight. I even rigged up a makeshift light table out of a piece of frosted plexiglass, basic wooden legs, and a lamp underneath. It's kind of rickety, but it serves its purpose, which is to 1) provide a surface for making actual paste-ups that I photocopy and reduce into contact sheets, and 2) provide an illuminated surface for negative stripping. I'm totally in love with the idea that I have all this stuff along with the ability to use it.

By the way, I think the typesetting looks just fine in your work. I've seen plenty of *photocopied* computer typesetting that doesn't look too hot, but I think its appearance is improved quite a bit by offset printing. And you have one advantage over me with my proportional spacing typewriters in that you can use italics, whereas I'm stuck with only one typeface per typewriter, and none have italics.

Now, I'm not against computers. I use these typewriters because I like how the copy looks, and I like using them and trying to maintain them. But if I had a spare hundred or hundred-and-fifty dollars, I'd probably buy an old used computer just to use for italics. Underlining gets old fast; or, I should say, it doesn't take much of it to distract the eye. Too much underlining is an eye strain.

Another handy little doo-dad I use is the Variograph headliner. It's a pantograph with a set of interchangeable templates which each contain the alphabet and numerals in various fonts. The template looks like a long ruler with letters and numbers engraved into it. To use the Variograph, you slide a template into the unit to your desired character, place it along a straight-edge, and insert the Variograph's tracing stylus into the template's character. As you trace, a corresponding arm moves along with your hand motion and marks the character onto the paper using India ink. The Variograph has two dials on it, one for

letter width, the other for height, scaled in picas from 8 to 72, and tenths of inches. Some, including one of mine, have an adjustment for slanting the letters backward or forward. It's kind of a cumbersome device, but it's unique, it's fun to use, and the variability of letter height, width, and slant allow for some creativity: you can mix fonts, do reverses, illustrate the inside and outside of your letters, and you can even make direct contact negatives without having to make the intermediate photocopy, thus preserving a degree of image quality.

I found most of this stuff on eBay. The small items like the Variograph, the waxer (that I had to rebuild and clean out), and some of the typewriters, I had shipped, and for the most part they survived shipping. One Exec arrived slightly damaged due to poor packing, but it ended up being too far gone to repair-wise for me to do anything with, so no big loss there. A standard spacing IBM arrived pretty smashed up, again because of poor packing, and I've ended up using it for parts. It seems that when people actually pack properly – wrapping in plastic wrap to secure the carriage, padding with Styrofoam blocks, and double boxing – then the carriers will deliver them intact. The presses I bought locally, picking them up in person. Tariq Khan of *Rebel Stew* helped me out last year getting some presses from a retired printer in his area.

But that was last year when I could afford to buy things. In all of 2008, I have spent no money on printing equipment of any kind save for a new dampener form cover; nor have I done as much printing as I wanted because of the expense of plates, negatives, and chemicals.

Anyway, I'm telling you all of this because I can see you're interested in it. I hope you keep it going. You have a fine publication.

Best wishes.

Doug Harrison
Richmond, VA

Chicago and Utopia

Dear Anthony,

Hi – just wanted to send out a show of support for the great work you're doing at *Communicating Vessels*. The nod to Andre Breton in the name caught my eye and I found the writing wonderful in Issue 20. As a Chicago resident, I particularly liked the pieces about Maxwell Street. Thank gods there can still be found such rare magic at select places in Chicago – above all at the Velvet Lounge, a "grassroots" jazz club run by the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music, a utopian-type musical alliance still going strong. You can find accounts of the Velvet Lounge in Sterling Plumm's poetry collection, *Velvet BeBoys Kente Cloth*.

I'm enclosing a copy of my crypto-historical walking tour of Milwaukee's near South Side, *Building 17*, a work also inspired by Breton and the way he interfaces with city terrain.

Thanks again for keeping up the good fight.

Sincerely,

Daniel Hanrahan
Chicago, IL

John Steinbeck

To the Editor:

First and foremost, thank you for your willingness to publish what the mainstream lacks. It is my hope that C.V. will continue. If possible, please put me on your mailing list. I'm very interested in the subject matter.

Your C.V. #18 (the only one I've been able to get my hands on) with its multiple articles about the Wobblies, Joe Hill and the IWW, provoked many thoughts, leading me to pick up related material available to me. And so I'm in the midst of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which has Jurgis, a Lithuanian emigrant, in the midst of fertilizer dust, scratching a miserable existence out of the

stockyards of Chicago. The final chapter exudes socialism in a favorable light. I'm from the Central Valley of California, so mostly Steinbeck has been one to fill me with stories of avarice and the occasional triumph over corruption.

There was a radio commentary where it was revealed (according to memory) that Steinbeck had written a novel, more of a diatribe, that he felt too bitter to publish and sometimes the truth hurts. He penned it in disgust after watching farm owners take their harvest and burn them because the market prices were too low to sell. All this while migrant workers were beaten back, watching in hunger. This is Visalia mid-20th century, my hometown, and the town with a church on every corner. God bless!

The courts can incarcerate me, yet their system with all its means cannot dissolve my free-will to learn and understand. Publications such as yours build my awareness, making me a conduit for dissemination.

Sincerely,

Jason S.
Vacaville, CA

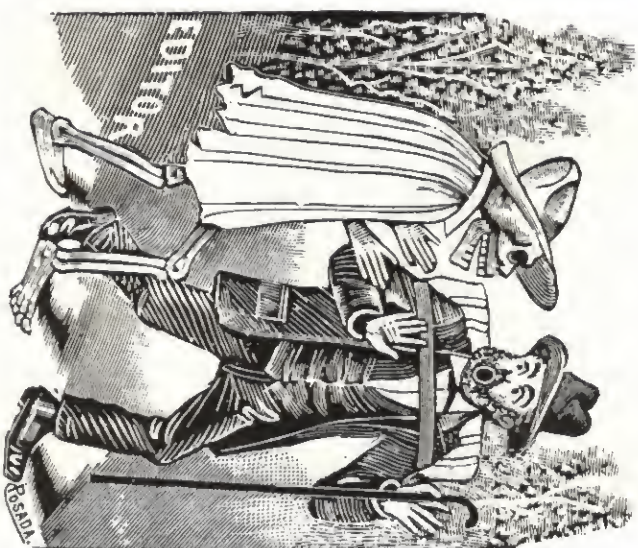
The Manual Handpress

Dear Anthony,

The other week I began an apprenticeship at the King Library Press here. You would love the place – all typesetting and binding is done by hand, and the most modern printing press is from the 1920s. It's a museum of printing, but all the presses are still being used! They even use the old wooden press that is completely manual (it takes two people to run).

Learning about traditional printing has made the history of bookmaking almost mythical to me. I can barely imagine the effort it must have taken to print the earliest books. Can you imagine setting type for every page of the Bible? Or

CROSSING THE BRIDGE



the bridge that conjures up creative vision and thoughtful experiment in my mind: the St. Johns Bridge.

It connects Northwest and North Portland by way of the Willamette River. The bridge was officially opened in the summer of 1931. The opening of the bridge saw the end of the ferry that was used as the principal mode of transportation to get from St. Johns to Linton. At the time, Linton – Linton was established before Portland proper – was a town of its own until the state of Oregon destroyed it by widening the highway that runs through the area.

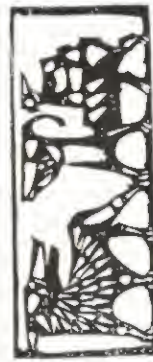
As for the bridge, it is said that it is haunted. Let me explain. In 1949 a young girl was kidnapped and raped under the bridge. Her captor, Morris Leland, allegedly held her there and eventually murdered her. Her name was Thelma Taylor. During this period the area underneath the bridge was filled with junk and there was heavy brush growing. Now the area underneath the bridge is Cathedral Park – apparently taking its name from the Gothic aesthetic of the bridge. Developers have recently built a number of partially unsold condominiums adjacent to the park. Based on the grisly nature of the kidnapping and murder, a growing number of people insist that the bridge and the general vicinity it is located in are haunted. The claims range from hearing voices (which could easily be the sound of the wind getting locked in the bottom pillars of the bridge) to seeing apparitions. On the other hand, new research claims that Taylor was murdered not under the bridge but many blocks away, in a pile of brush. In any event, the story has become a Portland legend which is told and retold.

My experiences walking over the bridge are certainly not the stuff urban legends are made of. Nonetheless, I have great fun imagining and

ing. I mean printing as an industry, with its drive towards automation and digitization. Pretty soon there might be less and less need for competent pressmen because of the push toward print on demand. If this ever does happen on a broad level, the out of touch and incompetent printing "industry" will have put itself out of business for good.

This winter we also finally got to read for the first time a work that we had intended to pour over many moons ago. What is this book? *The Dream of the Red Chamber* by T'sao Hsueh Ch'in. The novel was written in mid-18th century China. It would be hard to describe its rich meaning and unforgettable twists and turns. I felt like I was entering the aristocratic high society of China of a few hundred years ago, with all its intrigues, spells, superstitions, charms and lush imagery. Even with the Chinese cultural focus this novel lends itself to broader conclusions and understandings. After I read it I kept thinking about the scenarios laid out by the author. It is great and noble and human. The versions that are available in English tend to be abridgements of this gigantic work. Nevertheless, there are plenty of translations in English that I am sure would be worth your time and energy.

WELL, I THINK THIS ABOUT sums up a few of the books we have read lately. Don't believe the hordes of people who think that a book isn't worthwhile if it hasn't been recommended on a bestseller list. Books have their own history, and when you read them you can get a taste for the time they were written in. They are also catalysts for our own life stories and tales. One of the greatest pleasures of reading is realizing that the books we read can often tell us quite a bit about ourselves.



37



anonymous and not-so-anonymous group of printers and typographers achieved through the ages is brought forth to us in a historical survey, tracing trends and changes in the technology of printing and the book-publishing world. This is a worthwhile read. It makes sense of a vast history.

On a related note, Charles H. Kerr published Henry P. Rosemont's *American Labor's First Strike* in 2007. It is a collection of his articles on the labor history of the printing trade. The articles get a bit too detailed and specific for my tastes. Even so, it is nicely illustrated and places the labor history of printing in America in its appropriate historical context. From letterpress to offset printing the goal of printing as a for-profit industry has been to make the worker obsolete, destroy and delegitimize unions and unionization and to drive wages down. I am not talking about the small-scale guy in his shop working alone for virtually pennies, trying to make a liv-

a dictionary? There was a famous typesetter strike (in Russia, maybe?) where the main demand was getting paid for commas...

The other week I finished Kafka's *The Castle* and found it both spell-binding and strikingly different from the Thomas Mann essay introducing the book. Either Mann got it wrong, or I misinterpreted the book, the essay, or both. Now I'm about half-way through Agamben's *Infancy and History* as well as an absurd British comedy titled *A Melon for Ecstasy*. The latter is the story of Humphrey Mackeroy, a bookstore owner who has sex with trees. It is the strangest piece of fiction I have ever read! I recommend it highly if you enjoy odd, dark comedy, though I recommend Tibor Fischer's *Under the Frog* even more. It's a dark comedy set in Hungary between the end of World War Two and the crushing of the revolt of '56.

It's getting late, so I will end here. How is life with a printing press of your own?

All the best,

Don
Lexington, KY

Portland's Artisan Economy

My name is Josh Roll and I am working with Dr. Charles Heying on a book entitled *Brews to Bikes: Portland's Artisan Economy* and I am interested in speaking with you about your work here in Portland. I am in the process of organizing a group interview with 6 Portland area literary artists (book authors, zinesters, comic authors, comic artists, etc.) The process would take 45 minutes to an hour and would involve a set of questions designed to start a conversation about this topic (artisan economy of Portland) in order to provide information for the book. The timeline for the interview is looking like some time in the next two to three weeks, depending on the other

participant's availability. The venue would be here on campus at the Urban Studies Building (5th and Montgomery) in one of the classrooms. I have reviewed some of your work and feel you could bring a lot to a conversation about Portland's artisan culture and would be very pleased to have you join us. Please let me know if this sounds like something you would like to participate in.

Cheers,

Josh Roll
Portland, OR

The Editor Responds:

I wrote to Josh telling him I don't really consider myself part of Portland's vaguely defined and quite trendy artisan economy. I can't remember the details of my letter precisely.

I tend to get aggravated when people present Portland as being a grand utopia of huge bike lanes, artists, endless rows of fruit trees and artisans. There are some things I like a lot about Portland. These things are where I live, the close proximity to natural areas to hike and enjoy nature, my garden plot. But I am tired of Portland pride and hype about the city. There are even shirts and bumper stickers that have been made which say, "People's



A Portland Art Pimp

14

Republic of Portland." Gag. Vomit. Nausea. Developers and people with money have "discovered" the city. They are now remaking it with financial assistance from the Portland Development Commission, an organization known for its good works and charitable deeds. These good works and charitable deeds include razing buildings they deem as slummy or not upscale enough and threatening to close businesses that don't meet the criteria they set.

So come to Portland. Experience the dazzling feats of gentrification and hardened attitudes. Come one, come all. You don't want to miss the train to Portland. If you miss the train, I guess, you can catch the next one coming in. Or better yet ride your bike here with your possessions strapped to a cart on the back. After all, isn't that why you are moving here? Because cars have been banned and people gather their meals - from fruit trees scattered throughout the city?

Life's Strange Crossroad

Anthony,
I've been meaning to write you sooner but I wanted to wait until I could give some small monetary recompense for what is a most commendable publication. Like hearts beating to the same tune there is so much you have written about and included in each issue that touches me if not directly at least through my research and reading.

In issue #19, I find the first piece by Carlos Cortez, a friend and fellow worker of mine. I first met him at the 75th anniversary of Joe Hill's execution back in 1990. He had an art display of Joe Hill's work at a local (SLC) union hall which he had shipped from WSU in Detroit.

In #18, you mentioned B. Traven who is one of my favorite authors. I loved *The Death Ship* and am now putting that further up on my "read again" list. I had recently read Kenneth Rexroth's *An Autobiographical Novel*. I'm just amazed by the historical contacts he made; both in persons and events.

What was especially surprising and delightful

about #18 was the opening story by a very good friend of mine, fellow worker Eugene Nelson. He always shows up in the most unexpected places for me. Let me explain:

Back about 1997/98 I took a visit to Oakland, CA. I contacted Gene before I left and mentioned that I may have some free time and would he like to get together. He said he'd love to and to give him a call when I got to town. As the weekend turned out with very little free time and was nearing the end, I gave up on expecting ("expect the unexpected") to meet with Gene. I was exhausted staying with the people I was with and decided the next morning I would hike down to catch a bus in Berkeley, spend the day there and bus it back to the airport and sleep there until my flight in the early morning. The bus pulls up at the stop and I inquire with the driver whether this is the bus to Berkeley. He tells me no, I have to catch the bus on the other side of the street. As I walk back down the steps of the bus I hear someone from inside the bus call out "Tony!?" I turn around and lo and behold it's Gene Nelson. To this day I'm amazed by how we got together. I spent the day with Gene taking me around San Francisco and Oakland. We visited Tom Mooney's grave and the Saint's (Vincent St. John's) grave. Went to Jack London's Bar. I slept in his VW van that night and he drove me out to the airport in the morning.

Thanks for keeping him in the public's eye.

Back to #18. You have a review of a book by Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill*. Franklin was a huge influence on me. As you most likely know, he passed away last month. I never did get to thank him in person (chances did come but no crossroads in our paths) but I think he knew.

I wrote a note to Penelope giving her my condolences and expressing how he has influenced me and my life. In the last ten years, we have lost Gene, Carlos, U. Utah Phillips and now Franklin. I'm certainly glad they crossed my paths in various ways.

And now a new crossroad has emerged in the

BOOK OF THE ISSUE: *The Principle of Hope* By Ernst Bloch



The Principle of Hope by Ernst Bloch is an unusual book, written by an unusual author. It is a three-volume work that traces the human striving toward a utopian spirit and world. The emphasis is on how art and culture have frequently expressed utopian impulses in the form of fantasy and dreams. I don't know if I will venture on and read the third volume once I complete the second volume. Nonetheless, the material in the first two volumes has proven to be of high quality. I could do without the numerous references to German philosophy and his sometimes overwritten philosophical divinations in general. All the same, there are a lot of aspects of this book that are still entirely relevant and extremely thoughtful. Bloch wrote the book while living in the US as a German-Jewish exile in the years 1938-1947. It wasn't translated into English until the 1980s. In many ways his thoughts are quite similar to those of the surrealists and Bloch became an influential figure in the counterculture of the 1960s. Even if you don't read every word in these volumes, it is a work that is worth perusing through.

that the tide would turn toward a better world after the First World War. It didn't. Nonetheless, the novel - entitled *Colas Breugnot* - is filled with a festive spirit, in the tradition of Rabelais. It is Pantagruelian to the core. Breugnot mouths truths about war to priests who refuse to listen to him and has a love and passion for life that reflects a rustic and rural sensibility without the parochial prejudices so common in such settings. His attitude and approach to life is utopian in

orientation. This is one of my favorite works that I happen to be reading through again. You can see aspects of the spirit of *Colas Breugnot* reflected in the pages of this publication.

Five Hundred Years of Printing by S.H. Steinberg is a work dedicated to bringing to life the history of the printed word. Those who spent their lives toiling away in dingy, dark and cold cellars and workshops to keep culture alive are showcased in this work. What the sometimes



editor of the 1940s surrealist-oriented publication called *View*. It said, "Ancient regards, from Philip Lamantia," with some kind of symbols and then the year 1989. This must have slipped through the cracks. It was only \$6.95. Otherwise, they would have been charging probably close to \$50 for it. It was to my advantage because now I have a little piece of history easily within my grasp. The book itself is my favorite collection of his poetry. The focus of the poetry is on his experiences hiking, camping and the contrasts between the city and the wilderness in the Northwest and the Southwest. But there is more to it than that. He draws pictures of ancient ruins and

how the catastrophes and messes' of politics and history are related to how we interact with one another and the natural world. His poetry creates an astonishing alchemy of elements: creation and destruction, mythology and history, love and hate, beauty and terrifying ugliness. Lamantia died in 2005. His poetry is timeless.

Recently I read *Rehearsing with Gods: Photographs and Essays on The Bread & Puppet Theater*. This book lays out the premise of this radical theatre troupe and provides excellent photographs of their performances which accompany the text. It brings me back to when I saw them perform in Montpelier, Vermont on the Fourth of July in 1999. It was a spectacular play of metaphor, satire and dark humor. If you ever get a chance to see them strut their stuff, I encourage you to do so. As for the book, it is well worth your time.

I found a great copy of Kenneth Rexroth's *In Defense of the Earth*. It is the original version, and it is typeset in a few different beautiful sizes and styles of Granjon. It was printed by Peter Pauper Press in Mount Vernon, New York and published by New Directions in 1956. The book was printed on what appears to be vellum paper of some kind and I keep looking at the book as a whole with a sense of awe and wonder. The feel of the paper is amazing and the typesetting is immaculate. It was letterpress printed. I doubt you can even get the sort of paper this book was printed on in this day and age. Most paper suppliers are oriented toward paper for laser printers on computers. So much for art and beauty in production. Those have been lost. As for the poems, this is my favorite collection of his work. How great it is to read lines like: "Most of the world's poetry/ Is artifice, construction./ No one reads it but scholars./ After a generation/ It has grown so overcooked./ It cannot be digested."

Merry and joyful and fantastic and wise and fun is the contagious French character known as Colas Breugnot. Romain Rolland created this pacifist woodcarver in 1918, perhaps in the hope

form of your excellent publication. Title being a tip of the hat to Andre Breton no doubt. Thanks so much.

Please find enclosed some funds to help with the costs, put me down for a subscription.

In solidarity!

Tony Roehrig
Salt Lake City, UT

The Editor Responds:

Just think: with virtually every person owning a cell phone these days spontaneity of encounter and experience will become close to nonexistent. Is this the kind of world people really want? The people who inhabit this world are becoming more and more dull and tedious and unimaginative. And I suspect that even if I climbed the highest mountain peak in the universe Joe Blow or Jane Doe would show up at the top with their radiation-spewing device, yammering away, repeating, "Hello, hello, hello, hello, hello," "Are you there?" Duh, haven't you ever heard of bad reception? Shut the damn thing off and enjoy the scenery and the hike. Cell phones are only part of the problem. But I frequently want to grab some superglue while an annoying cell phone user isn't looking and dab a little on their phone. That way the phone can *truly* be glued to their ear.

Tony's description of his chance encounter with Gene represents the sort of curious experiences and interactions this publication tries to evoke through the twin medium of writing and printing.

Radical History

Anthony, Heard of *C.V.* through *The Match!*, and picked up a few issues at Black Sheep Books in Montpelier, Vermont. Quite an interesting journal you have here, and a good looking one too – Eberhardt Press does a fantastic job.

Thanks for pointing me in the direction of



Jude the Obscure. I finished it just the other day, and found it an absolutely devastating read. I'm not sure how it escaped my attention for so long, or why it seems so little read generally. And Charles H. Kerr is a publisher I was completely unfamiliar with. Rosemont's Vache book has opened up some very interesting worlds for me. Trying to find something easily accessible by Josef Weber aside from the pieces on Ken Knabb's website.

Shawn Wilbur is having a series of talks on radical history at the Laughing Horse, Tuesdays at 6 PM through October. Lots of interesting ideas on how life could be better arranged. He's producing a series of pamphlets to go along with the talks, including one with a piece by Sidney Morse which is the best explanation of Josiah Warren's equitable commerce that I've come across. Most of that material should be accessible through his blog, the Libertarian Labyrinth.

I look forward to seeing the new issue of *Communicating Vessels* soon, and I'll be a subscriber once I get a permanent place to live and steady source of income.

David H.
Portland, OR

The Editor Responds:

In typical Portland fashion next to no one showed up at the talks on radical history. They were cancelled because of lack of attendance. But yet Portland is at the pinnacle of activity and different ways of being. Sure. Right. Uh ha. Let me spell it out: Of the bigger-sized cities I've lived in Portland takes the cake as far as apathy and lack of commitment go.

Maxwell Street

Dear Editor,
Thank you very much for the two issues of *Communicating Vessels* which I received today. I particularly appreciated the article in issue 20 about Maxwell Street. I was brought up halfway between Maxwell Street and Chicago's Chinatown (a few years back – oh, okay, quite a few years back) and found the article of particular interest...

Kathy C.
Westchester, IL

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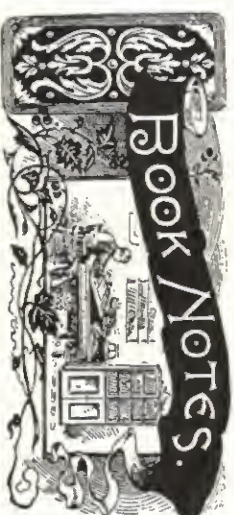


AN IMAGINATIVE AND UTOPIAN VISION: The Life and Death of Franklin Rosemont, 1943-2009

WHEN I WAS in high school I discovered a book that had a profound impact on my future growth and development. What was the name of that book, you might ask? *Haymarket Scrapbook* edited by David Roediger and Franklin Rosemont. It was published by what appeared to be an ancient and mysterious libertarian socialist publishing house in Chicago: Charles H. Kerr. I found listings for several other obscure and unusual titles. They had been publishing since 1886, over one hundred years. The books ran the gamut: philosophy, labor history, literature, socialism and anarchism. With titles such as *An Appeal to the Young*, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, *You Have No Country!* I became intrigued. The central thread that ran through these titles was that something was wrong with the world we live in and something needed to be done to change it.

Haymarket Scrapbook itself is a meticulously organized compendium on the case, the trial and eventual execution of the Chicago Haymarket anarchists of 1886-1887. But the scope of the book was much broader in that it related the case to the struggle for the eight-hour workday and the travails of fighting for a human world. I used the book as the basis for a high school research project and my teacher was quite dismayed and perplexed by the radical conclusions I drew from the Haymarket affair and the Pullman strike which I also investigated.

These are some of my thoughts when I draw back and examine the early influence Franklin Rosemont had on me. For those readers who don't know who he was, Franklin Rosemont was a labor historian, surrealist, utopian dreamer and agitator. He died suddenly in Chicago on April



WHAT HAVE WE BEEN reading lately? That is a good question and we will try to answer it. But let us start with a few words about how books relate to our histories, individual and collective.

When I think about certain authors and books I am brought back to different periods in my life. Looking at a book title, cover art or author name conjures up various images and imaginings of myself. These images and imaginings are, of course, a blend of fantasy and reality. We often like to portray and imagine ourselves in a very specific manner. The history of our lives is no different. For better or worse, there are shadows of truth and fiction blended together in our reflections on our past life.

Don't get me wrong. I am not one of those chic and hip apologists for the social reality that engulfs us. One of those commonplace know-it-alls who denies history and historical tradition, saying there is no objective reality to work from, and ultimately suggesting that the whole of history and the history of ideas and social experimentation is a series of fictional narratives. We would never advocate such a flawed view. Objective reality does exist. Nonetheless, people's values, prejudices and sympathies color it, positively or negatively depending on our experiences, viewpoints and the time and society we lived in. I think it is quite trendy and dangerous for people to revel in their own ignorance and intellectual laziness. There is an endless menu of trends and intellectual shortcuts promoted by the academy. Many of them eschew the basics of life: reading, writing, arithmetic. Some of them

even go so far as to suggest that what we are experiencing is a mere "simulation" that has no merit outside of our own ill-defined "subjectivity". Go tell that to someone who is now living on the street in Paris or New York City because they got laid off from their job, or try presenting your brilliant "theoretical" and "philosophical" breakthrough to a poor farmer living in a hovel without running water on the Gaza strip.

What I am getting at here in a longwinded sort of way is this: history as recorded by various authors – and the history of our own lives – can still be documented and presented. But as with anything, they should be read and understood with a critical eye. *Wholesale* rejection without attempting to understand is trendy and is best avoided.

With that out of the way, we can continue. The other day I was rummaging through old books of mine, and a few of them caught my eye. As I gazed at the covers and titles and authors I was brought back to various scenes and scenarios I experienced and witnessed. The books themselves told their own story. As they told their own story the story of my life was bound up in them. Trials, intubations, growing up, changing and evolving as a person, were as much a part of the books as the *actual* storyline within them.

THE BOOKS WE HAVE read recently will continue to form and shape who we are. Speaking of experiences and encounters is interesting in relation to a copy of a poetry book by Philip Lamantia I found over a year ago. It has its own history. I went to Powell's Books with the express purpose of finding this book. I had only seen it there once before. I was pleasantly surprised to find it on the shelf when I arrived. Its title is *Meadowlark West*, and back in the '90s I owned a copy of it. It is not a rare book. If you look hard enough you can find a copy of it fairly easily. But as I opened the cover I realized how unique this particular copy was. It was inscribed by Philip Lamantia to Charles Henri Ford, the

and threw in his lot with the Communist Party, only to break with them a short time later and return to the JFH, whereupon he wrote *Opium of the People*, arguably the most scathing, uncompromising attack on Stalinism to have been ever published in the Arab world.

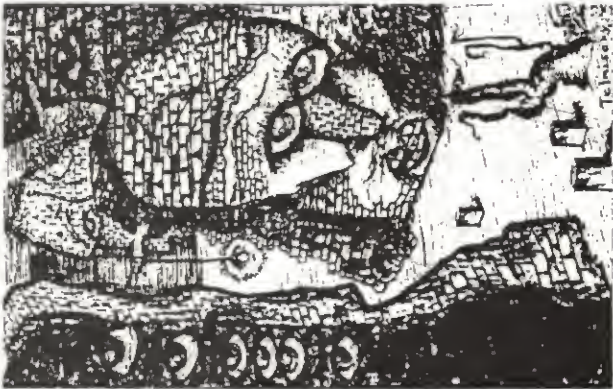
But otherwise anarchism has been a near-constant beneath their Marxist analysis. For example, in a piece published in Cairo in 1936, Georges Henein had championed anarchy as "the victory of the mind over certainty"; ten years later, he translated a poem by antifascist exile Stefano Terra dedicated to the insurrectionary anarcho-communist Errico Malatesta (who, incidentally, had fought against British troops in Egypt in the early 1880s) and published it in the pages of the last surrealist magazine of the period, illustrated with an automatic drawing by Ramsis Yūnān. In another instance, Feisal 'abd al-Rahman Shahbānder wrote an essay called "Limitations and Boundaries" in 1940 for *al-Tatawwur* that proclaimed:

The word "freedom" is one of those rare words that contain everything. It cannot be added to or subtracted from – if we were to define it, then we would be committing a major error. By defining "freedom" we restrict its meaning, and by explaining it we limit its significance, for the word "freedom" is one of those words that, when released, reveals its meaning by itself. Perhaps the furthest that the human mind has gone in imagining how to free itself from limitations and boundaries is what anarchism has said in the phrase: "Neither god nor master."

The next time you overhear some idiotic "expert" apologize for Western military interventions by saying that one of the problems with the contemporary Middle East is that there are no traditions of liberty, mention the Cairo surrealists. The JFH is just one of the vast array of currents of radical libertarian thought in the

Arab world (and elsewhere) whose stories have been violently suppressed by the forces of industrial capitalism and bourgeois liberal democracy to such an extent that they are now largely lost to history.

¹ At this time, the surrealist poet Benjamin Perét, his comrade from the Spanish Revolution Grandizo Munis and Trotsky's widow, Natalya Sedova, were issuing joint declarations from Mexico City denouncing the Fourth International.



Kāmil Al-Tilmisāni

Go and tell my friends that I have set off for the high seas
And that my boat is dashed to pieces;
It is in the religion of the gibbet that I shall lie;
Mecca and Medina no longer mean anything to me.

Al-Halladj (858-929 AD)

12, 2009 at the age of 65. We never met one another. We chatted on the phone once and exchanged letters. He and his wife Penelope were generous encouragers and financial supporters of this project.

It is sad we never got to sit down and chat with one another face to face. I am certain we would have had a lot to gab about. Rosemont's interests and enthusiasms were extremely wide and scattered, making for a truly unique human being and stellar writer. In reading his book on Joe Hill, you get the sense that his knowledge of American labor history and popular American folklore was boundless, even encyclopedic.

The books and articles he wrote that were bent in the surrealist direction show that Franklin was familiar with almost every obscure alchemist, jazz musician, eccentric and folk legend. I don't think I will ever tire of going back to his books as reference points for unusual characters in history that are essentially written out of official accounts.

But because Rosemont was a serious historian and writer doesn't mean that he spent his days cooped up in libraries, buried in books. In the 1960s he was intimately involved in Vietnam War protests and was part of a youthful group that called itself Rebel Worker. They published a



F. Rosemont, *The Dialectic of Master and Slave*

journal by the same name. More recently, Franklin participated in demonstrations against the big bank bailouts in his lifelong home city: Chicago.

He and his widow Penelope were also involved with the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company since 1971. As a cooperative publishing house, Kerr has tirelessly worked to make unknown chapters in history better known to working people and the general public.

In addition, Rosemont was the editor of the four issues of *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* that were released. In the last few years of his life, he was editor of the Surrealist Revolution Series put out by the University of Texas Press.

He was no stranger to Chicago's radical history. Rosemont made his studies of the countercultural and seedy nightspot in Chicago, the Dil Pickle Club, an exciting and exhilarating blast into the past. Chicago will never be the same without his restless and passionate approach to its history.

Of the books he wrote and published, *An Open Entrance to the Shut Palace of Wrong Numbers*, is perhaps his finest. It presents his experiences with the perennial mystery of the wrong telephone number. It is more than that, though. Within the book is his vision of the dream, a free society, utopia and how they intersect with one another. And the book is contagiously funny in many places (see the excerpt below from the book for an example of this).

As with all human beings I am sure Franklin had his faults and contradictions. But that doesn't take away from what he contributed to labor

history, surrealism and the general cause of social transformation. What is more, his vision of the limitless imagination, utopia and a free society are something to build upon in a world that steadily loses its imagination and very ability to see beyond the ugly reality we have created.

I can say without exaggeration that Franklin's writings and letters of encouragement have contributed to making me a richer human being. Indeed, reading the *Haymarket Scrapbook* at the age of 15 was a catalyst to discovering other works on similar subjects.

Read his books. Support the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company. Those are two ways of keeping a memory of his life and the books he wrote alive.

Rest in peace and farewell, Franklin, great mentor.

A Letter From FRANKLIN ROSEMONT

Here is the last correspondence I received from Franklin dated November 16, 2008. It was written in beautiful calligraphy.

Anthony!

Many thanks for the newest issue of *Communicating Vessels*, forwarded to our new address.

The new issue is great, and everyone in the group has enjoyed it immensely. Thanks especially for reprinting Penelope's essay on Maxwell Street, your thoughtful notices of her *Dreams & Everyday Life* and my book on Jacques Vache and your contrarily comments on the Charles H. Kerr Company!

We are enclosing a few new items: *Chicago, Paris, Prague '68*, a book of texts by Benjamin Peret; and the manifesto of the Athens Surrealist Group which we just received a few days ago.



march of some 3,000 students in Alexandria moved towards the districts where 30,000 textile workers lived, prompting police to open fire on the crowd, killing five before the crowd dispersed. Another wave of arrests and more intense police repression followed.

Within six months of the general strike, sixteen members of the Egyptian surrealist group were imprisoned along with more than a thousand other political prisoners. The JFH unraveled: surrealist theorist and painter Ramis Yūnān was arrested in early 1947 and later expelled to France, and his friends Henein and Iqbal al-Ailly did the same, both breaking with the Trotskyist mainstream¹ and relocating to Paris where they, like many other surrealists around the world in the early 1950s, aligned with the anarchists. Other Egyptian surrealists were driven underground, into exile, or into retreat from participation in the spheres of political, social and cultural activity. Nasser's nationalist military coup in 1952 signaled the start of an increased hostility towards surrealism.

This mention of anarchism prompts me to say a few words to readers of *Communicating Vessels* about surrealism and Trotskyism. The surrealists were outspoken in their criticisms of the Soviet Union since 1933, but in an effort to save Marx and Engel's anti-capitalist baby from being thrown out with Stalin's unremittingly psychotic bathwater, they began in the mid-'30s to advocate dissident Marxist alternatives, such as the theories of Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexandra Kollantai, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Trotsky, and, by 1936 the various libertarian communists of the Spanish Revolution. Surrealist interest in Trotskyism, then, is probably best seen as a shorthand for interest in Trotsky's role as the revolutionary architect of Russia's withdrawal from the savage inter-capitalist hostilities of the First World War and for anti-Stalinist libertarian Marxism more generally, and not for his appalling work as



Kāmil Al-Tīmīsānī

Lenin's hatchet man against anarchists in Russia during the late 'teens and early 'twenties nor for his tenure as the Red Army high commander during the civil war against the White Russian counter-revolutionaries.

Despite this weakness for Trotskyism and their interest in Socialist Party politics during the Egyptian general elections, the surrealists of the JFH were never far from the black magnetic poles of anarchy. The ideas of anti-state communism have always been an important ingredient in all surrealist theory and practice – one notable exception in the Egyptian case was Anwar Kāmil, one of the founders of the Egyptian surrealist group who split from the JFH

Young Egypt Party, National Islamic Party and the factions of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood that were all suspected of collaborating with foreign agents of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, so any native Arabic-language antifascist propaganda was thought to be important for the war effort. By 1942, though, the threat of an indigenous Arabic group agitating for a militant internationalist fight to emancipate the workers in Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut, Algiers and Jerusalem outweighed the benefits of their antifascist interventions and the screws began to tighten.

In late 1944, Egyptian and British authorities began to organize a troop deployment to Greece to fight in that civil war – the right-wing junta there called for foreign assistance to battle the guerrillas that opposed their dictatorship. But when word reached leftist British soldiers stationed in Cairo and Alexandria that they were being sent across the Mediterranean to put down a revolt of workers and former antifascist resistance fighters, a mutiny began to brew. Among those Egyptian socialists who began to call upon British and Greek soldiers to refuse to fight against their fellow workers were those who had been active in the JFH – they smuggled water, food, money and small arms to the mutineers, and on one occasion, switched a cargo of pamphlets that the RAF was scheduled to drop: instead of official British propaganda ordering the mutineers to surrender, the plane instead dropped thousands of leaflets encouraging them to resist.

Following the strong showing by (non-Stalinist) Socialist Front candidates in the 1945 general elections, state repression intensified – the Egyptian government established a “Supreme Court of Security” that targeted revolutionary socialists with a strike force of political police officials from the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior and British military intelligence. A number of surrealists were picked up in police

RANDOM APHORISMS

of the Cairo Surrealists, 1937-47

Giving back freedom to the imagination that has been imprisoned; giving back desire its deadly force with all its might and madness – these are not passive activities.

Nothing is as useless as reality.

The woman who serves a man and the man who serves a president are both from the same social class: slaves.

By no means is desperation the stagnant cloud permanently floating over the imagination of the weak. Desperation breaks down doors and rifts cities. It is the storm from which great kingdoms of deliverance emerge.

No creative, spontaneous expression can be devoid of its maker's identity if it is to be a valid work.

sweeps that shut down publications, bookstores and left-wing culture clubs. In response to these crackdowns, the revolutionary socialists helped organize the protest movement of February 1946 against the King and British military occupation. Twenty-eight unarmed protestors were killed by the British Army and the Egyptian police force, which in turn triggered huge demonstrations and several strikes throughout February, including the general strike of February 21. Some of the surrealists were active in the publication of leaflets urging demonstrators to move their protests into working-class neighborhoods and away from the gates of the Palace: under the slogan “Towards the Workers,” a breakaway

In surrealist solidarity,
Franklin & Penelope

A Brief Message From The World's Greatest Rabbit By Franklin Rosemont, 2003

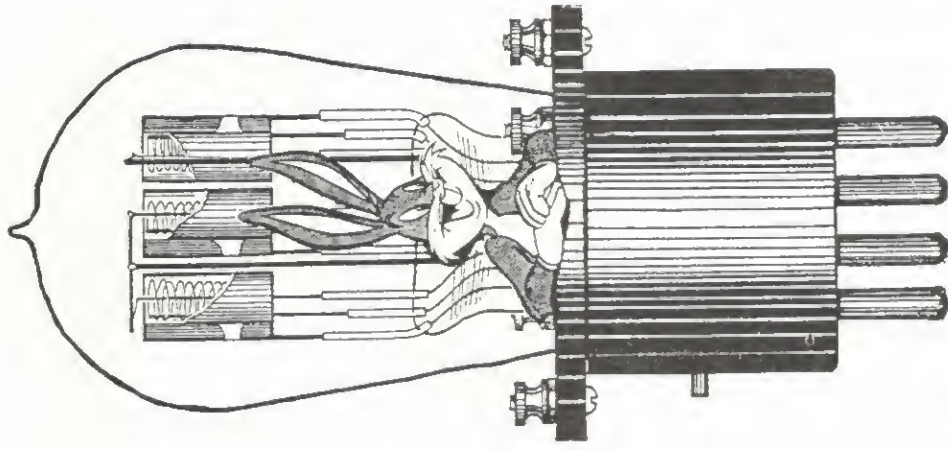
The following excerpt is taken from An Open Entrance to the Shut Palace of Wrong Numbers (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003). It demonstrates Franklin's unusual sense of humor.

Sometimes, when telephoning friends, I have been known to start with the words, “What’s up, Doc?” – a greeting popularized in the early 1940s by a film- and comic-book star who happens to be one of the very few world-class celebrities I admire.

Occasionally I have used this opening in calls that turned out to be Wrong Numbers. In every case I was able to tell that it was a Wrong Number well before the recipient uttered a sound, for my three-word question was invariably followed by at least five and sometimes fifteen or twenty seconds of silence. Long by Wrong Number standards, this silence was always broken by another question, asked in such a way as to convey indignation or mistrust, such as: “I beg your pardon?” or “Is this some kind of joke?” or “Who is this and what do you want?”

Not once, it is my sad duty to report, has a recipient of one of these calls ever answered in the voice or manner of Daffy Duck, Sylvester Q. Pussycat, Yosemite Sam, or any of the other characters who inhabit the world of the old *Looney Tunes* & *Merrie Melodies* cartoons. Could it be that the U.S. phonotariat suffers from an overdose of seriousness?

For a dismaying number of people, it is evidently bad enough to get a Wrong Number, but to get one from someone quoting Bugs Bunny is really too much for their minds to bear.



F. Rosemont, *Around the World on Eighty Carrots*

Fortunately, the World's Greatest Rabbit has also left us just the right response for these stuffed shirts. After saying, “I guess this is a Wrong Number, Doc,” I often add another direct quotation from Bugs himself:

“Don’t think it hasn’t been lovely – because it hasn’t!”

A BESTIARY

By KENNETH REXROTH

Written For His Two Daughters

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following collection of epigram-poems are from Kenneth Rexroth's 1956 book *'In Defense of the Earth'*. These epigram-poems were originally released as a small portfolio by the poet and former nuclear physicist Bern Porter. The original edition included Rexroth's drawings for each entry. It is a great holograph. In 1988/1989 the anarchist quarterly *'The Raven'* in London

published the sequence of epigrams in issues 5-7. (For some reason, however, they omitted a few entries.) The illustrations were, done by Clifford Harper. We typed out the epigrams and used a few of the images Harper drew. We are considering publishing a couple more of these in the next issue. These epigrams are brilliant, worldly-wise and witty. The bold images are a beautiful complement to the text.

SCARECROW

A hex was put on you at birth.
Society certified your
Existence and claimed you as
A citizen. Don't let it
Scare you. Learn to cope with a world
Which is built entirely of fake,
And in which, if you find a truth
Instead of a lie, it is due
To somebody's oversight.
These stuffed old rags are harmless,
Unless you show them the fear
Which they can never warrant,
Or reveal the contempt which
Of course is all they deserve.
If you do, they'll come to life,
And do their best to kill you.



art."

In response to Breton and Trotsky's manifesto, small FLARI groups sprang up in New York City, London, Brussels, Paris, Fort-de-France (Martinique), Santiago (Chile) and Cairo, but the timing, of course, was terrible: the outbreak of World War II (September 1939), the murder of Trotsky by Stalinist assassins (August 1940) and the subsequent splits within the Trotskyite Fourth International seriously impeded the network's internationalist efforts. Despite the disintegration of the global FLARI network in the early '40s, however, the surrealists who had set up Egypt's JFH stubbornly promoted the FLARI program, but their publications delved into other subjects: antifascist action, anti-imperialism, radical educational reform, Freudian theory, women's emancipation.

Each issue of the JFH newspaper *al-Tatawwur* ("Evolution") – the first socialist journal in Egypt since Marxism was outlawed there in 1924, and the first socialist paper to publish completely in Arabic – affirmed some of its concerns in its editorial statement: "This review fights against the reactionary spirit, protects the rights of the individual, and insists on the right of women to live in freedom. This review fights for modern art and free thought, and presents to young Egypt the movements of today." In the second issue of *al-Tatawwur*, a short statement by Tawfiq Hana' Allah called "A School of Discontent" summed up the group's goals: "Our primary task is to establish a school where we can teach people how and why they should be discontented, disappointed with the chains that bind them and the society whose values are set in stone." In one police spy report filed with the Egyptian prime minister, *al-Tatawwur* was described as a publication dedicated to "spread anarchy, destroy morals and religion and bring about the collapse of the pillars of the social and legal establishment necessary for the running of the country."

The JFH also organized conferences, debates,

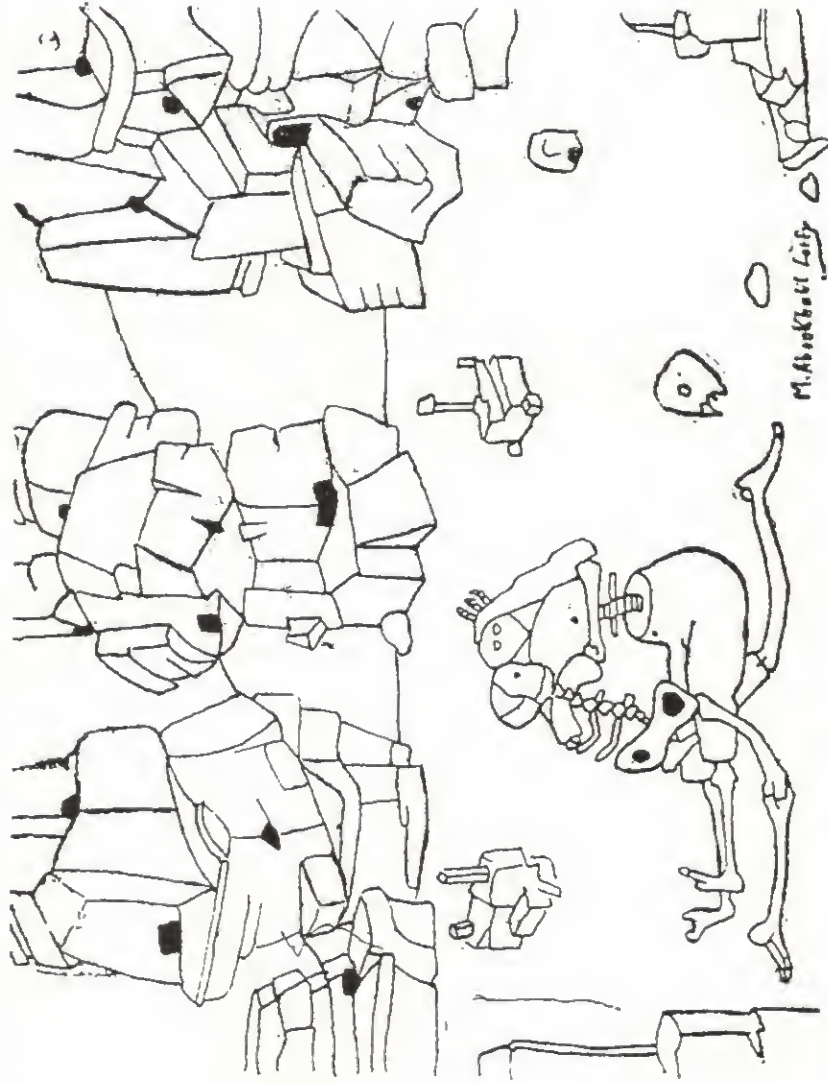
film screenings, and exhibitions, including five controversial annual "Independent Art Expositions" held in Cairo between 1940 and 1945, each of which presented a broad range of numerous new works in a diversity of styles and media and that sometimes included art from elsewhere in the Arab world, such as Syria and Lebanon. Publication of feisty declarative tracts accompanied each exposition that reiterated some of the FLARI's core tenets: the 1941 "Free Art in Egypt" manifesto, for instance, called for the "arousal of astonishment in the minds of the masses," intractable resistance to the dominant forms of conservative neo-classical image-making, and encouraged discussions about contemporary currents in visual culture; 1942's proclamation "The Message of Free Art" demanded that creative energies be directed to restoring "what has died in the grasp of tyranny" since the rise of fascism, and it cheered the "strong, arousing psychic current" of international solidarity with those suffering under those dictatorships that was electrifying many of those whose work appeared in the exhibition. One of the most remarkable things about the JFH's Independent Art Exposition was the large number of women whose works were prominently featured, especially in the fields of photography and painting – in her memoirs, the prominent Egyptian left-wing feminist Inji Aflaun recalls that her introduction to Marxism came while she was a high-school student in Cairo thanks to three years of contact with members of the JFH and her participation in their "independent art" exhibitions.

Because it was the first socialist organization to be led by Arabic-speaking indigenous Egyptians, the JFH had been always closely monitored by the authorities, but both Egyptian and British authorities tolerated their activities since the JFH was so vehemently antifascist – at the time, there were a number of resurgent Sunni Muslim national liberation leagues like the

intellectual and creative workers pledged to "emancipating the imagination from any and all constraints" by any means necessary. FIARI was formulated in Coyoacán, Mexico at the home of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in the summer of 1938 by surrealist poet Andre Breton and exiled revolutionist Leon Trotsky with the manifesto "For an Independent Revolutionary Art."

This brief joint statement from Mexico proposed FIARI as a critical response to the reactionary cultural politics of Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and Franco. FIARI was described as a free forum of "divergent aesthetic, philosophical,

and political leanings"; it was to be open to all so long as there was a complete commitment to the radical freedom of all creative expression in the culture wars against the repulsively racist Nazi "New Traditionalism," the Third International's insipid regimes of socialist realism and proletarian literature, and all other authoritarian policing of free thought and expression. The "For an Independent Revolutionary Art" statement concludes with a dialectical couplet that succinctly captures the goals of FIARI: "We want the independence of art for the revolution and the revolution for the extreme liberation of



Abu Khalil Lufti



EAGLE

The eagle is very proud.
He stays alone, by himself,
Up in the top of the sky.
Only brave men find his home.
Few telescopes are sharper
Than his eyes, I think it's fine
To be proud, but remember
That all the rest goes with it.
There is another kind of
Eagle on flags and money.



HERRING

The herring is prolific.
There are plenty of herrings.
Some herrings are eaten raw.
Many are dried and pickled.
But most are used for manure.
See if you can apply this
To your history lessons.



RACCOON

The raccoon wears a black mask
And he washes everything
Before he eats it. If you
Give him a cube of sugar,
He'll wash it away and weep.
Some of life's sweetest pleasures
Can be enjoyed only if
You don't mind a little dirt.
Here a false face won't help you.



SEAL

The seal when in water
Is a slippery customer
To catch. But when he makes love
He goes on dry land and men
Kill him with clubs.
To have a happy love life,
Control your environment.



fact, it could easily be argued that the multatis were far worse than the Shah. In any event, the hopeful yearnings and strivings of the popular movement in 1979 were dashed. Repression, economic contraction, religious fanaticism and the banning of strikes followed. When we fast forward to the movement that shook Iran this past June, we can then see that electoral fraud was just the tip of the iceberg.

What does this have to do with Arab surrealism? Not much. It relates to how there might be a few openings in the gears of social repression. Openings for what? Openings for social experimentation in the spirit of surrealism. I am not holding my breath about this. I expect the situation in the Middle East to continue on in the way it has for years to come. As any genuine surrealist would, however, argue: our dreams, desires, imaginings and longings are a second life.



Ramīs Yūnān, *The Perversity of Thought*

ART AND LIBERTY: Surrealism in Egypt

Part I

By Don LaCoss

EGYPTIAN SURREALISM BROKE above ground in late 1937 in Cairo, midwifed through the efforts of Georges Heinein, Ramīs Yūnān, Kāmil al-Tīmīsānī and the brothers Fu'ad and Anwar Kāmil. Throughout the Second World War, the group attracted the involvement of native Egyptians and European expatriates; they propagated a program for the revolutionary defense of the imagination, free expression and social freedom. Their approach was consistent with every other surrealist group in the world: a challenging blend of libertarian anti-capitalism, Freudian theories of the unconscious and wild, poetic subversions of the sort found in the pages of Rimbaud and Lautréamont. In addition to targeting the moribund cultural values of academicism and conservative pharaonism that dominated Egyptian intellectual and artistic production at the time, the surrealists also critically attacked fascism, the British military occupation, Egyptian monarchists and the liberal bourgeoisie. Muslim nationalism, the brutal persistence of landowner feudalism and the institutionalized exploitation of women. The Egyptian surrealists were active for the best part of the decade before being dismantled by Egyptian police and British military occupation authorities in the first days of the Cold War.

The greatest and most lasting impact of the Egyptian surrealists' projects was the creation of the "Art and Liberty Group" (known in Arabic by the initials "JFT"), which had been set up as a chapter of the International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art (acronymed "FIART" in French), a global network of

Surrealism

IN THE ARAB WORLD



Maroïn Dib, *Paranoïc Lust*

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE by Don LaCoss is part of a longer project he proposed to contribute to this publication. When he asked if we were interested in publishing this material, we said most certainly. In the future he intends to write a second part to the piece on Egyptian surrealism we are publishing in this issue. In addition to the stuff on the Cairo surrealists, Don is also in the process of compiling documents by the Arab Surrealist Movement in Exile. The Arab Surrealist Movement in Exile was, in a sense, a reconstitution and continuation of the work the Egyptian surrealists had started in the late 1930s. The Arab Surrealist Movement in Exile was around in the 1970s. They published a journal, pamphlets, tracts. According to Franklin Rosemont's short essay in *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* No. 3 en-

titled 'Surrealism in the Arab World,' ...*The Arab surrealists' journal, Le Desir libertaire, has provoked great controversies in the Arabic press. Because of its vehemently revolutionary character, anti-nationalist and anti-religious, it is banned from the mails and from bookstores in all Arab countries (being produced in Paris by exiles).*

When placing such subversion in the context of the contemporary Middle East, it appears to be a mere blip on the radar screen. We would agree that the viewpoints expressed by the Cairo surrealists and the Movement in Exile are quite marginal, both in the contemporary context and the historical context. Even so, human beings living under brutal dictatorial regimes are sometimes able to break out of the mold. When the movement of exiles was active in the 1970s, there were declarations signed by individuals originally from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Algeria. I don't know what became of those involved. Perhaps Don will uncover some information on their individual doings and whereabouts in the here and now. Until then we will have to settle for his fascinating article on the Cairo surrealists.

For a few weeks this summer we saw in Iran a massive uprising, ostensibly over rigged elections. It was more than merely the elections that people were upset over. Since the 1979 revolution there has been discontent about the way in which the economy contracted when the mullahs seized power. Indeed, after they tortured and killed various dissidents, the economy and social system took a major nosedive. The removal of the Shah did little to fix the problems that Iran faced. In

VULTURE

St. Thomas Aquinas thought
That vultures were lesbians
And fertilized by the wind.
If you seek the facts of life,
Papist intellectuals
Can be very misleading.



WOLF

Never believe all you hear.
Wolves are not as bad as lambs.
I've been a wolf all my life,
And have two lovely daughters
To show for it, while I could
Tell you sickening tales of
Lambs who got their just deserts.



RESIST!



AWNING PAWNS of law and order haven't entirely won their game. Resistance lives on. In small pockets here and there people refuse to accept the daily humiliation they experience. Cops and

bosses and priests and mullahs and mad politicians and bureaucrats are the outer face of a world gone haywire. If we remain silent and fail to act against the misery and slavery we encounter, we remain pawns. REFUSE TO BE A PAWN!